

# The Moose Call

The Newsletter of the Friends of  
Mt. Spokane State Park

January 2002

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## Report from the President

Cris M. Currie

During 2001, the Friends accomplished most of the goals that were set for the year, starting with a snowy welcoming party for new park manager **Steve Christensen** and his family.

A Friends Group bulletin board was custom designed and built by volunteer **Bill Birk** for the entryway at Bear Creek Lodge (formerly Kirk's Lodge). It is now full of maps and other information about the park so that lodge guests can easily orient themselves to the park's resources. Bill also taught a chain saw safety course in the spring so that volunteers could be certified to operate a chain saw in the park for trail clearing.

In March, the Friends organized a meeting of park staff, the Inland Empire Paper Company (IEP), natural resource interests, and the Winter Knights Snowmobile Club to address concerns having to do with snowmobiling in sensitive areas both within and immediately outside the park. IEP will be prohibiting snowmobiling in its plantation areas where riders have topped the young trees. The club agreed to put up more signs and make additional notations to their trail map to indicate that these sensitive areas are off limits.

The Friends Group wrote, printed and made available in the park the first edition of its park brochure. It contains a trail map and information on park history, recreation activities, facilities, hours, and natural resources. This is the first brochure the park has had since 1989.

In early June, the yield triangle trail courtesy signs, purchased by the Friends Group, were installed at key points on the trail system. The signs are designed to be part of an educational effort to help hikers, equestrians, and cyclists properly yield to each other while using the trails.

During the summer, volunteers collected data on the damage to the Ragged Ridge Natural Area Preserve from illegal trail use. The information is being used for grant writing and for finalizing restoration plans for the area. Volunteers also hiked out to the ridge three times to pull Spotted Knapweed from several small areas.

The Friends also got politically active by highlighting the financial plight of the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission. Friends Group members wrote to their local legislators encouraging them to vote for more state support for parks and encouraged others to do likewise via its web site and newsletter.

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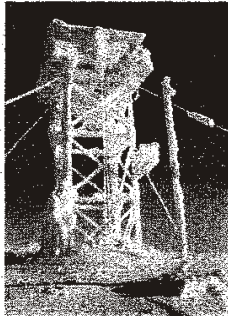
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### Fire Lookout To Be Moved

The fire lookout tower on the summit of Mt. Spokane has been taken down, with the 14' square cabin completely intact. The Department of Natural Resources, which erected it on a 42' tower in 1979, decided it was no longer needed and too expensive to maintain. So it was donated to the park. The Mt. Spokane State Park Advisory Committee and park staff agreed that it should be



maintained as a lookout but moved to the summit of Quartz Mountain where it could also be rented as an overnight shelter on a year round basis. The tower would be reduced to 15 feet to make it safer and prevent the bad icing problems that plagued the old tower. The site on Quartz Mountain at 5,160' is much more isolated and not accessible by vehicle. The view is even better than from the summit of Mt. Spokane. The Quartz Mountain property was purchased by the park in December of 1999. The Friends Group is now looking for volunteers to help erect, fix up, and maintain the new lookout. Spokane resident and author of Fire Lookouts of the Northwest, **Ray Kresek**, has volunteered to help manage that effort. Contact Cris Currie (466-9540 or [criscurrie@igc.org](mailto:criscurrie@igc.org)) if you would like to get involved.

### IMBA Leads Trail Class

Joey Klein and Lisa Crampton from the International Mountain Bicycling Association's (IMBA) Trail Care Crew visited Mt. Spokane for 3 days last August to lead an all day trail building class. Joey has been on the road for 3 years leading these courses in 35 states and 9 countries. The program is sponsored by Subaru of America. The class was attended by 12 enthusiastic trail users



including the park ranger staff and **Mike Brixey**, who represents mountain bikers on the park Advisory Committee. After a morning session explaining the details of how IMBA modifies, designs and builds low maintenance trails that stand up well to all kinds of non-motorized use, the group got to immediately apply this new information to a popular single track trail in the park. The group changed a problem climbing turn to a rolling crown switchback by elevating the corner, leveling the deck, insloping the upper leg, and outloping the traverse above the corner. They also added some rolling grade dips to slow down and divert the flow of water off the trail. The newly revised IMBA trail building manual is now available free on their web site at [www.imba.com](http://www.imba.com).

### Friends Group and Advisory Committee Roster for 2002

**Mark Augenstine**, Motorized  
Winter Recreation  
**Bill Birk**, Nature Based  
Recreation  
**Phil Bolich**, Passive Summer  
Recreation  
**Anita Boyden**, Treasurer  
**Mike Brixey**, Mountain  
Biking  
**Ken Carmichael**, Equestrians

**Jeffrey Corkill**, Education  
Community  
**Cris Currie**, President  
**Tom Frost**, Non-motorized  
Winter Recreation  
**Donald Hurst**  
**Gino Lisiecki**, Active  
Summer Recreation  
**Sam Moeller**, Business  
Community

**Sheila Pachernegg**,  
Environmental Community  
**Barbee Scheibner**  
**Aaron Spurway**, Secretary  
**Caroline Halley**, Ex-officio  
**Randy Knight**, Ex-officio  
**Roy Almeida**, Ex-officio  
**Avery Peyton**, Ex-officio  
**Randy Chambers**, Ex-officio

### **Kary Moves On**

**Kary Peterson** concluded 9 years as a ranger at Mt. Spokane in December and took a new job doing environmental education with the Washington Department of Ecology in Spokane. He is well known by Friends Group members as being always great to work with. In fact, he received an Agency Merit Award in 1995 for his extensive work with volunteers. His vast knowledge of the park and easy going style will be sorely missed, but we still expect to see him helping out as a park volunteer!

### **Road Report**

Road construction is scheduled to begin again June 1, 2002 on the lower end of the main park road. The road is expected to be closed all summer. It will be open at 2 hour intervals only for those needing to access the condominiums and for those having official park business. Park visitors will need to park their cars near one of the entrances and enter the park via the trail system.

### **Volunteers Needed**

The Friends Group is looking for someone to volunteer to help collate the history of Mt. Spokane State Park. Numerous newspaper clippings and other documents have been published about the park in its 75 year history, and the Friends Group would like to pull it all together into a comprehensive book.

Volunteers are also needed for the Fire Lookout Committee to help re-erect, restore, and

maintain the fire lookout. If you are interested in either of these projects, please contact Cris Currie at 509-466-9540 or [criscurrie@igc.org](mailto:criscurrie@igc.org).

### **Friends on the Web**

Don't forget to visit the Friends of Mt. Spokane State Park web site at [www.mtspokane.org](http://www.mtspokane.org) for a newly designed trail map and lots more information about Mt. Spokane!

### **Trail Courtesy**

The following guidelines were adopted by the Friends of Mt. Spokane State Park in order to help provide a better experience for all park users.

#### **All Trail Users**

Don't cut switchbacks. Avoid muddy areas. Leave no trace. Pets on leashes at all times. Protect stream quality. No ORVs in the park!

#### **Hikers**

Yield and announce presence when approaching livestock. Step to downhill side for livestock to pass. Tread lightly off trail.

#### **Cyclists**

Yield to livestock and hikers. Announce your presence when approaching others. Step to downhill side for livestock to pass. Maintain control. Stay on trail.

#### **Livestock Users**

Stay on trail. Maintain control of livestock. Warning: Llamas must yield to horses.

#### **Snowmobiles**

Ride in designated areas only. Stay on groomed trail. Respect park hours. Use caution around others. Slow down in unsafe conditions.

### **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! All contributions are tax deductible.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

I would like to volunteer: \_\_\_\_\_

I have enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Mail to: The Friends of Mt. Spokane State Park  
621 W. Mallon, Suite 509, Spokane, WA 99201

Thank you!!

Message phone: 509-467-9343 Web site: [www.mtspokane.org](http://www.mtspokane.org).

## Diplomats On Mountain Bikes

With so many ways to enjoy recreating in our parks, some trail use conflict is probably inevitable. However, by understanding and practicing the rules of trail courtesy, most of this conflict can be avoided. For mountain bikers, the skills of trail diplomacy are especially important, perhaps even more so than those of cornering, and jumping.

The International Mountain Bicycling Association (IMBA) has issued some well recognized rules of the trail which include cyclists "yielding the trail" to other users. In their Summer 2001 newsletter, this is explained in more detail. IMBA defines yielding as "slow down, communicate with the people you meet, be prepared to stop, and pass safely." For example, if a cyclist is riding 8 mph and a hiker is walking at 1-2 mph, the hiker is likely to perceive a safety threat. But if the cyclist is riding at 15 mph and slows to 8 mph, the cyclist may feel they have respected the rule while the hiker perceives the same threat. IMBA suggests that cyclists always slow down even more than what they think is a safe speed for passing.



Should cyclists be expected to stop, dismount and stand at the side of the trail for all others to pass? While this might be appropriate on occasion, if it were the general expectation, it would certainly take the fun out of mountain biking, at least on heavily used trails. While some hikers might want to reserve public trails exclusively for their own use, this is not fair to other users. Instead, IMBA suggests a more ideal scenario for cyclist/hiker encounters. Cyclists should slow way down, make eye contact, say "hi" and read the situation to see if a dismount is necessary. While dismounts are essential when meeting horses, they are optional when meeting hikers. If the hiker sees the cyclist in time and gracefully step to the side, the cyclist should continue to ride slowly past. However if the hiker

is startled, and unable to move completely to the side in time, a full stop is probably appropriate. A little extra time spent in polite conversation can go a long way toward promoting a more positive image for mountain biking.

Certainly it is far easier, and therefore appropriate, for hikers to move to the side than for riders to brake, stop, get fully out of their pedals, and dismount. But on the other hand, hikers obviously have a much longer tradition of trail use, and that tradition is important for trail diplomats to remember. Hikers are usually (but not always) in the woods to enjoy a simple, quiet, relaxed activity. It is one of the few places left where people can go to escape technology, noise, and the high speed of everyday life. It is therefore a vital re-creation activity in the truest sense of the word. If high speed cyclists want to continue to share that world, it is in their best interest to go out of their way to ensure that all other users continue to have a positive experience. IMBA has recognized that both low impact riding and good trail diplomacy are the keys to the future of mountain biking. Much can, and is, being done to make trails physically more durable, but it is the responsibility of each cyclist to ensure that encounters on the trail are diplomatic and positive.

## Meet the Rangers

**Steve Christensen** is the new park manager. Steve came to Spokane in December of 2000 from Sequim Bay State Park where he worked for 12 years. Steve considers Mt. Spokane one of the best parks in the system and is really excited about his many new challenges. He has a B.A. in biology and is very interested in promoting environmental education. He has lots of experience working with volunteers, and he is an active outdoor recreationist who can often be found on the park trails, running, skiing, or snowmobiling. His primary goal is to greatly improve the park's trail system. Welcome Steve!

**Dennis Lotts** was hired last April as a park ranger. He graduated in 1999 from WSU with a degree in natural resources and previously worked as an aide at Daroga and Lincoln Rock State Parks. He is now the volunteer coordinator and has been busy attending user group meetings. He is married and the father of 2 young daughters.

