

The Moose Call

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

January 2019

Www.MountSpokane.org

From the President

by Cris M. Currie

The year started with a now traditional Friends Group/staff guided First Day Hike on January 1. Some participants had a quiet, foggy hike to the Snowshoe Hut, while others cut through the fog to brilliant sunshine on the summit. In March, KREM-TV did a video about the Vista House that featured a chairlift ride with Brad McQuarrie, an interview with Lara Gricar, and a fireside chat with me. In May, Paul Buckland and I hosted North American Moose Conference participants in a hike up the snowy summit road to Bald Knob and a drive out onto IEP property. Moose were found to be doing very well at Mt. Spokane.

Several Friends Group projects were completed over the summer. The front wall of the Cook's Cabin woodshed was repaired, preventing the wall's collapse. Several signs were replaced due to vandalism. The annual knapweed pull on Ragged Ridge netted only 7 plants in July and an incredible zero plants in September. Friends Group members and park staff hiked the new Lower 290 bike trail to review it for problem areas. The areas were then addressed by Evergreen East bike club volunteers who later started clearing the route for the upper section of trail. A sign order was then prepared for the new bike trail. We also submitted site plans for log

benches to be built and placed on Trails 103 and 121 and at Saddle Junction. Bjorn Rossow built two log benches to fulfill requirements for his Eagle Scout award and delivered them to the park in October. WTA plans to build the third one. The biggest project for the year was the installation of a new vault toilet near the Snowshoe Hut. The Group proposed the plan, raised the money, and "supervised" the installation to the happy satisfaction of both summer and winter users. The park also received a winter recreation grant to hire a seasonal ranger to assist with the snowshoeing and Sno-Park programs. Her name is Jess Sprenger Velardi.

During the fall, Friends Group members participated in two planning meetings for a new lodge called the Mountain Recreation and Education Center. I provided a park tour to the summit and the Snowshoe Hut for participants in the North American Environmental Education Association Conference in October. Discussions have been ongoing over how to make access from the Selkirk Lodge to the Nordic ski trails easier for beginners and the disabled. This season a new ramp along the parking lot to Valley View will be tried. Just as ski season was expected to start, staff discovered that the smaller Nordic groomer needed \$2,000 in repairs and there was no money to cover it. The Friends Group had the invoices sent to them for immediate payment.



Before



After

Historic Plaque Replaced

In 1929, William H. Cowles, Jr. donated Section 19 (640 acres) to the park. This section contains parts of the Day and Kit Carson Loop Roads which were cut by Francis Cook between 1910 and 1912. About 1/4 mile west of the KC Loop Road, the Day Road crosses a stream where early motorists to the park could rest and refill their car radiators. At this site in 1932, Cowles installed a bronze plaque on a boulder, to both commemorate his donation and honor Frank W. Guilbert, a Spokane man known for his tireless pursuit of better roads throughout eastern Washington. Guilbert directed the AAA in Spokane and as an officer in the National Parks Highway Association, he organized a Chicago to Puget Sound road trip in 1916 for business leaders to promote tourism and road improvements. He died in 1940. Cowles' plaque disappeared decades ago, but its location remained obvious from a photo found in the Ferris Archives. Last year a bronze reproduction of the plaque was accidentally found in a park storage area and the Friends Group gained permission to re-install it. So today, the site is once again a spot for weary travelers to stop and not only contemplate the quiet stream and the remarkable density of old growth grand firs (preserved by Cowles' philanthropy), but also to imagine what travel to Mt. Spokane must have been like in the early 20th century.

New Benches Arrive

Since 1999 and the first Advisory Committee draft trail plan, volunteers have wanted to install a bench or two for quiet relaxation within the park. That idea has finally gained traction thanks to Bjorn Rossow who organized the construction of two log benches to meet the requirements for his Eagle Scout award. The Friends Group provided Bjorn with assistance in navigating the permit process, installation locations, design ideas, and access to larch logs from the park which were cut to meet his needs by Brad McQuarrie. Bjorn then assisted younger scouts in the work and delivered the finished products to the park in mid-November. Unfortunately the permitting process could not be completed before winter, so installation will have to be done this summer.



Bjorn's Bench

One bench will be set along Trail 121 just above a tributary of Deadman Creek. The site is about half-way between the new downhill bike trail and the paved road, so it is a beautiful, quiet area. The other bench will be set next to another stream along Trail 103, which is a dead-end trail off of Trail 100. Next year, WTA plans to build a third bench in memory of Jay DeWitt. It will likely be placed at Saddle Junction along with a new vault toilet, eventually.

New Vault Toilet Installed

Another big project was completed in November just three days before the onset of cold winter rains. The Friends Group proposed the plan and raised the money for a new CXT vault toilet near the snowshoe hut. The old one was nearly impossible to use through the winter, and with ever increasing numbers of people visiting the hut on snowshoes, a new facility was desperately needed. So the Friends Group applied for its first grant from the state Winter Recreation program and received \$10,000 to add to a previous grant of \$4,000 from the Johnston-Fix Foundation. The Friends Group donated another \$6,000 and Parks provided about \$12,500 worth of permitting and installation work for a total cost of \$32,500! The Spokane-made solid concrete unit came in three pieces and has a porch to help keep snow away from the door.



It was delivered on two very long flat bed trailers and a special crane was needed to fit the pieces together. The second trailer was too long to make it around two tight corners, so it was chained to the big excavator to prevent it from sliding completely into the creek. In the end, it was a successful installation that has already proven its value.

Trail Projects

The Washington Trails Association donated 959 volunteer hours this year to Mt. Spokane doing maintenance work on Trails 130 near Day Mountain, 110, and 100. The work mainly involved reestablishing trail width and cleaning drainage features to help prevent erosion.

Two short reroutes for Trail 131 were laid out by volunteers and reviewed by park staff. The upper reroute will make it easier to access the Bald Knob picnic shelter by snowshoers and the lower reroute will eliminate the erosion problem on a section that is too steep. A reroute for the lower portion of Trail 140 is being planned so that instead of terminating on Bear Creek Lodge property, there will be a new trailhead behind the park office once the shop and sand shed are moved to their new location further up the main road. Thirdly, a brand new trail is being planned that will create a loop with the Day Road along the ridge top to its north. Finally, we submitted a site plan for an interpretive trail around the Cook's Cabin Heritage Area. The Friends Group expects to complete its restoration work on the CCC built woodshed this summer.

A Gingerbread Vista House

The Vista House was completely rebuilt in gingerbread by Mt. Spokane lovers and pastry chefs Megan Gaines and Ricky Webster for their submission in the Christ Kitchen annual gingerbread build-off. The Friends Group sent them the original plans for the building and they followed them as closely as they could. The recipe included 36 lbs of gingerbread, 8 lbs of Krispie Rice cereal, 30 lbs of powdered

sugar, 1 qt of almond extract, 7 lbs of marshmallows, and 25 lbs of fondant.

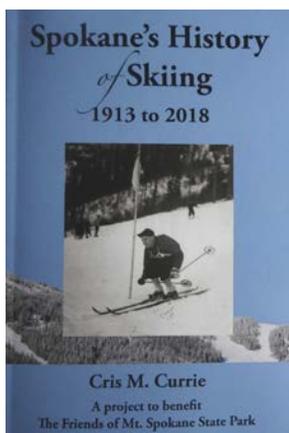


Megan and Vista House

They spent approximately 100 hours on the project, and while they did not win a prize, they were motivated to make their first entry in the contest because they really wanted to do the Vista House!

New Ski History Book Published

A new book about Spokane's skiing history was published in late October as a benefit project for the Friends Group.



The book covers 105 years and details how Spokane was the first in the state to build a ski jump, start a ski club, build a rope tow, start a ski patrol, and build a chairlift. Spokane also

briefly had the first double chairlift in the world. However, the book is not just about skiing. It illuminates how, despite the near constant jockeying for power and influence, government and private entities can come together in a successful partnership for the benefit of the larger community. In the first 2 months the book has sold over 200 copies and has netted the organization over \$2,000. Minor updates are on the website. It has also won a book award from the International Ski History Association, and the author will be going to Park City in April to receive it.

MREC Moving Slowly Forward

Since 2016, Friends Group volunteers have been participating in discussions about constructing a replacement for the Selkirk Lodge, known as the Mountain Recreation and Education Center. Two meetings, organized by parks planner Brian Patnode, were held in the fall to prioritize the physical needs for the facility as perceived by both winter and summer users of the Nordic ski area. An earlier plan was rejected, so a draft revision is expected in a few months. It will include an additional parking area that will also incorporate a summer horse camping unit. Public meetings are planned for 2021 with possible construction in 2025.

For volunteer opportunities, be sure to check the Washington Trails Association website at www.wta.org/volunteer and go to the Eastern Washington region for work parties at Mt. Spokane. You can also check at www.mountspokanetrails.wordpress.com. Visit the Friends Group website at www.mountspokane.org for all things Mt. Spokane. Remember to renew your Discover Pass, and get out and enjoy your park!