



# *The Moose Call*

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

*January 2014*

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## **From the President**

by Cris M. Currie

The combined Friends Group Board and Advisory Committee met 5 times in 2013, and much was accomplished. A new mountain biking trail plan was finished last December and implementation began over the summer. Included in that plan is a new summit to park entrance trail which was flagged and is now in the permitting process. A professionally designed mountain bike brochure was created by **Kim Boston** in an effort to better explain the rules for biking within the park. Trail 140 was designated the temporary primary downhill biking route and two reroutes were cut to eliminate uphill sections of that trail. Additionally, the uppermost section of the trail was rerouted to eliminate the severe erosion problems. Also with regard to trails, Washington Trails Association volunteers, led by **Jane Baker** and **Randy Greyerbiehl**, constructed two new log bridges on Trail 100 which make the streams much easier to cross, especially in the winter.

At the Parks Commission meeting in Spokane last June, the Advisory Committee received an award recognizing its 18 years of service before it was officially dissolved, since its original goal of creating a park master plan has been achieved. The Friends Group Board will carry on with the same membership, and it will take on a policy and management advisory role to the Park Manager in addition to its other responsibilities of organizing

volunteers, raising money, visitor education, and taking on park projects.

The most significant accomplishment for the year was the construction of the snowshoe hut at Smith Gap. In 2009, a grant was secured from the **Johnston-Fix Foundation**, but numerous delays postponed the ground breaking until this fall. A private contractor was hired by the Friends Group who just barely had enough good weather left to get the structure closed in for the winter. Volunteers plan to finish the work this summer.

Work continued on the GIS mapping project. With the data problems resolved, volunteer **Jason Kenley** helped move the cartography a few more steps toward camera ready maps for the park guidebook. A new core trails area map was produced utilizing the GIS technology.

Last winter, the Park Manager and Board President participated in the initial meetings of a local state parks coalition group consisting of representatives from the State Parks Foundation Board and the three local state park Friends Groups. The plan is for this group to not only coordinate local state park events and projects, but to prioritize local capital projects and formulate plans for a capital campaign.

This summer, the Friends Group hopes to start a Heritage Area restoration and interpretation project, and revegetate closed trail sections. A lot is happening at Mt. Spokane!

## Snowshoe Hut Up!

Conceived, planned, funded, and organized almost entirely by the Friends Group, this hut is our most ambitious project so far. After **Rob Lindsay** helped secure a Johnston-Fix Fnd. grant for \$12,000.00 in early 2009, the



Friends Group was initially planning to build a yurt in the picnic area at the intersection of the Lower KC Loop Rd and Trail 110. Park officials discouraged a yurt in that location because of the dense forest and its proximity to the stream, and later rejected the location because too many of the large trees in the area were diseased and could fall any time. The Smith Gap site was chosen because of its relatively flat topography, the fact that all of the surrounding trees are healthy, and its distance away from any streams. It is 1.25 miles from the parking area, so being further away, it will help motivate beginning snowshoers to hike further than they otherwise might. The plan was also changed from a yurt to a sturdy cabin, the drawings for which had to be approved by a structural engineer due to the routinely heavy snow loads. Fortunately, **Mark Aden**, of DCI Engineers, volunteered his firm's services for the stamped drawings after **Brad McQuarrie** made some initial sketches. The plans were completed in January 2012, but the county required some revisions, and the state had to finish their process, so it wasn't until September that we actually had a building permit in hand. By then, it was too late to start construction that year. So we geared up to start in May or June of 2013, when park staff thought they could build the foundation.

While other jobs took priority, the mid-summer purchase of a mini-excavator made the work much easier when it finally started in late July. After the site was cleared and leveled by local staff, two Wenatchee based staff members constructed the rather extensive foundation and put the floor on in less than 2 weeks, while they were waiting for another job to start. We had thought we would be able to complete the rest of the hut with volunteers, but neither of the two volunteer contractors we had in mind were available, and we were unable to find a last minute substitute.

Because the roof trusses required some special expertise, and time was getting short before cold wet weather set in, we went with a paid contractor. Solid Structures came in with a bid that unexpectedly fit our budget, and they were able to start at the end of September, thinking it would only take 7-10 days to close it in for winter. However, the remote location, the weather, and the roof trusses proved to be significant challenges, so the job was not completed for over 3 weeks, but the two workers did a magnificent job.



The hut is 24' X 16' plus a 6' porch. It sits on 18 concrete piers and has a beautiful open ceiling. We are planning to finish it during the summer of 2014, install a wood stove, and open it for day use next winter. It could become a summer rental eventually if we can create a suitable business plan. Among the jobs that still need to be done are: steps and ADA ramp, railings, insulation, window trim, wall paneling, flooring, painting, skirting, landscaping, furniture (preferably hand made), a woodshed, and a roof over the vault toilet.

## Trail Plan Finished

Last January, the Advisory Committee submitted a very detailed amendment to the Mt. Spokane State Park Comprehensive Trail Plan that was approved by the Commission in 2010. In addition to miscellaneous corrections and updates, the amendment specified a new mountain biking management plan. Also last January, we elected **John Henry**, the current president of Evergreen East which is part of the Evergreen Mountain Biking Alliance, to the Friends Group Board. John has been very active in implementing this new plan.

The goal is to create more separation between downhill mountain bikers and other summer recreation visitors to the park. To accomplish this, we plan to build an entirely new downhill, single track trail just for mountain biking, which will take riders from the summit of Mt. Spokane to the park entrance. It will be numbered Trail 290. The trail is being designed by those who will be using it. They will also provide most of the labor to build it and to maintain it. The upper half of the trail will switchback down from the summit, just south of Chair 1, and cross the paved road at the Lower Selkirk parking lot (the snowmobile lot). It will then run just below and parallel to Trail 120 until it joins the bottom of Trail 121 to reach the park entrance trailhead. Downhill riders will have right of way on this trail, so others will not be advised to use it. It is expected that this trail will be so much fun to ride, that other downhill routes will see relatively little use. Construction of the upper part might start this summer.

Trail 140 has temporarily been designated as the primary downhill biking route until Trail 290 is completed. To improve Trail 140 for biking, two reroutes were cut last fall. First on the upper part, a steep and badly eroded dip in the trail was rerouted. Secondly, a new trail was cut from Saddle Junction to the top switchback in the middle section of Trail 140. This eliminates

the need to ride uphill toward Mt. Kit Carson. Eventually the original trail along the base of the Kit Carson meadow will be closed. Ranger **Jerry Johnson** roughed out these trails with the park's new mini-excavator, and Evergreen East organized hundreds of volunteer hours to do the finishing work, with much more to be done this summer.



Additional mountain biking trails will be considered in the future further north within the downhill ski area, but the Advisory Committee recommended that no further trails be built within the rest of the park except for the ones already specified in the trail plan. These include proposed Trail 138, a non-biking trail which will connect the Bald Knob Campground with the Mt. Spokane summit; Trail 180, which will connect the Kit Carson Loop Road with the west entrance and form a loop with the Day Road; and proposed Trail 141, which will connect lower Trail 140 with Trail 111 behind the current maintenance facility. A 'Round the Mountain trail at 5000' is also still a possibility but awaits further Commission action with regard to land classification and ski area expansion.

The Advisory Committee has long recognized the need for additional trails in the park but was cautious about recommending too many, in order not to unduly crowd wildlife, and create more maintenance work than is reasonable. Members have also been concerned about reducing the aesthetics of space and the sense of wildness within the park.

## Misc. News

Washington Trail Association crews contributed 560 volunteer hours building two log bridges on Trail 100. Material costs were covered by the Friends Group. Logs were felled and prepared on site and were expertly bolted together. Two other water crossings are planned for improvements this summer.



Thanks to Evergreen East and local Eagle Scouts, new kiosks are going up at trailheads in the park. These will contain location maps and other park information. Split rail cedar fencing has also been added to trailheads thanks to a special grant received by state parks for beautification projects.



The Friends Group added a new snowshoeing route this winter which starts just below the Selkirk Lodge. The Trail 260 Loop includes an abandoned logging road which was previously slated for use as a snowmobile bypass trail.

A first annual snowshoe event called Snow Stomp took place at Mt. Spokane on December 7. Registration funds will benefit the Friends Group snowshoe program and

EWU physical education scholarships. **Robin DeRuwe** assisted the student organizers.

If you would like to help finish the snowshoe hut or participate in other volunteer projects this summer, please contact our volunteer coordinator, **Holly Weiler** at [hmweiler@yahoo.com](mailto:hmweiler@yahoo.com).



[Www.mountspokane.org](http://www.mountspokane.org)

Over \$74,000.00 in new winter recreation money was secured this year by Spokane Nordic volunteers and park staff. The money will be used for increased Nordic grooming and trail mileage, plowing for multi-use access, and the new groomer storage barn pictured below.



Thanks go to all of the volunteers organized by **Jeanie Wagenman** who pulled knapweed from along the Park roadsides! If you would like to help on future noxious weed pulls, contact Jeanie at [lyk2hyk@juno.com](mailto:lyk2hyk@juno.com).

Don't forget to visit our website for all things Mt. Spokane, including updated trail maps and parking information, and a new donation button. Thank you!