



The Moose Call

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

February 2016

Www.MountSpokane.org

From the President

by Cris M. Currie

The Friends Group Board of Directors met a total of four times in 2015 and much was accomplished. On April 2, after securing a business license and reseller's permit, the long awaited guidebook for the park was published and distributed to five local retailing locations, where 100% of the proceeds are donated to the Friends Group. Then in June the Friends Group published and printed 2500 color copies of its new brochure for distribution at the park office.

The Cook's Cabin area restoration was the second major project undertaken by the Friends Group in 2015. Volunteers began work on June 23 to restore the log and stone woodshed built by the Civilian Conservation Corps in 1934. Throughout the summer and until work was stopped by snow in November, volunteers removed the siding, replaced six logs in the walls, replaced all of the rafters, injected epoxy sealer into many of the old logs, stained and sealed all of the logs, reattached most of the original siding, replaced the roof sheathing and cedar shakes, and repaired holes in the masonry. Work will continue in 2016.

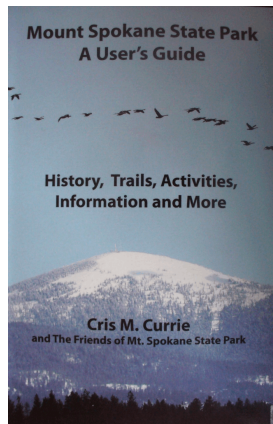
The snowshoe hut built by the Friends Group last year received several upgrades. New signs were installed on Ragged Ridge, and volunteer mountain bikers completed tread work on the lower half of the new Trail 290. Additional Eagle Scout projects were initiated for the construction of bridges for this trail and for a set of steel stairs for the Vista House lookout.

On November 17, a massive wind storm hit Spokane County toppling thousands of trees. All of the park's roads and trails were closed due to the damage, but volunteers rallied to the cause, assisting staff to reopen the park just in time for the arrival of deep snow and a busy ski season.

At the 2015 annual meeting in February, Barbee Scheibner, Rob Lindsay, John Henry, Robin DeRuwe, Mike Close, and Mark Augenstine left the Board. Newly elected were Gerry Fitzgerald, Bob Zeller, James Harrison, David Goode, and Steve Sparks. Cris Currie, Anita Boyden, and Ken Carmichael were elected for additional terms. Ray Downard, George Momany, Darrell Soyars, Shelley Tschida, Les Weatherhead, and Holly Weiler are continuing with unexpired terms. Cris Currie was re-elected president, Ken Carmichael was elected vice-president, Anita Boyden was re-elected treasurer, and Bob Zeller was elected secretary.

Guidebook Published

Ten years in the making, the Mt. Spokane guidebook was finally published last April by Gray Dog Press of Spokane and the Friends Group. It is available at the park



office, the downhill ski area, Bear Creek Lodge, Riverside State Park, Fitness Fanatics and Mountain Gear where 100% of the proceeds are donated to the Friends Group. As a result of this incredible cooperation with our local retailers, book sales raised over \$2,400.00 in the first nine months! The book is also available online through the publisher at www.graydogpress.com.

This 150 page volume covers everything you need to know about what to do, where to go, and how to make sure you're following all the rules in our 13,200 acre natural playground in Spokane's backyard. It contains the most accurate and up-to-date GIS based color relief maps available for all the trails and roads, including those used for Nordic skiing, alpine skiing, and snowmobiling. Fifteen trail routes are mapped and described in detail with elevation profiles and numerous photos. Proposed trails and projects are also described, so you will know what changes to expect in the near future. You'll also find a complete

checklist for birds and butterflies found in the park, including 32 color photos of those most commonly seen. There is a summary of the early history and a more thorough accounting of the last 20 years of park planning, including a review of the land classification and master plan jointly developed by the local Advisory Committee and Parks Commission staff. Written by the Friends of Mt. Spokane State Park president, Cris Currie, the book represents the culmination of the Mt. Spokane Friends Group/Advisory Committee activities since 1995. Since Gray Dog is a short-run publisher, the book will be updated as needed, and distribution should eventually reach throughout the northwest. Additionally, The Friends produced a brand new companion color brochure for the park.

Cook's Cabin Woodshed Restoration

The other major accomplishment for the year was starting the restoration and interpretation of the Cook's Cabin Heritage Area. This is where skiing began on the mountain in the early 1930's. Francis Cook built his Paradise Camp and cabin at the end of his toll road in 1912. It was demolished in the 1930s after the Caretaker's Cabin was built and nicknamed Cook's Cabin. The CCC built a stone and log woodshed next to that cabin, which was used



not only by the park's superintendent, but by recreational skiers as well. A stone latrine was also built and then rehabilitated in 2003. The cabin was demolished in 1980, but the woodshed, mysteriously, was not and has been in danger of collapsing for many years. This summer, volunteers George Bryant, Randy Greyerbiehl, Cris Currie, Scott Redman and others undertook the task, after extensive consultations with Parks Commission staff, of rehabilitating the woodshed. Throughout the summer and until work was stopped by snow in November, volunteers removed the siding, replaced six logs in the walls, replaced all of the rafters, injected epoxy sealer into many of the rotting logs, stained and sealed the exterior of all of the logs, reattached most of the original siding, replaced the roof sheathing and cedar shakes, and repaired holes in the masonry. Work will continue this summer,



and will include finishing the roof, replacing the window and door, improving the drainage and the floor, and adding benches. Plans also call for an interpretive ADA trail around the site.

Snowshoe Hut Upgrades

Over the summer, Nathan Chapman, along with friends and family, built a woodshed for the snowshoe hut as his Eagle Scout

community project. He was able to frame the structure at home and then haul it on a trailer up to the site for finishing. The project provided a perfect opportunity for Nathan and his friends to learn basic carpentry skills for the first time. Lumber for the roof, walls and floor was milled from park logs for this and other projects by Brad McQuarrie with the ski area's new portable saw mill. The metal roof was provided by park staff. Volunteers quickly filled the shed with wood for the current winter season.



Thanks to Robin Redman and numerous other volunteers, the hut's interior is now graced with eight different interpretive panels depicting the park's natural history. Mounted on planks from a huge fallen hemlock, wood cut-outs of animals, tracks, and plants tell the story of the food chain through four seasons and three ecological zones (forest, meadow, and stream). Most of the cut-outs were made by members of the Inland Northwest Scrollers Club, and many artists, teachers, retired craftsmen, and friends were involved in putting it all together.



One additional upgrade involved adding a shelf under the front window, expertly made from some beautiful hardwood scrap by Randy Greyerbiehl. This summer, plans include making the hut more accessible to those with disabilities.

Ragged Ridge



Ragged Ridge is the 650 acre Natural Area Preserve in the SE corner of the park. It is accessible by single track trail from the park, and open to hikers, snowshoers, and backcountry skiers for recreational trail use and scientific research, but horses, bikes, and motorized use is strictly prohibited. The use restrictions have been in place since 1985 to protect several rare or threatened plant communities. The area's sole trail has been badly eroded over the years from illegal motorized use, and every year since 2000, volunteers have pulled invasive knapweed and Dalmation toadflax which had gained a foothold because of that use. Hundreds of knapweed plants were sprayed and pulled in the early years, but last summer, only about a dozen were found. It appears that complete elimination may be very near. Also last summer, the Friends Group produced and posted new signs for the NAP boundaries in an effort to better educate our community as to the importance of the use restrictions and

thereby gain better cooperation. The old signs were very legalistic and unfriendly in their wording, and consequently were shot full of holes. The new signs might also get shot at, but at least the state's intentions are clearer!

Trail 290

Construction of the new summit to entrance bike trail (290) got underway last summer. Members of the Evergreen Mountain Bike Alliance, along with park ranger Jerry Johnson and his mini-excavator, nearly completed the lower section between the park entrance and the snowmobile (Lower Selkirk) parking lot. Design work continued on the upper half so that construction can continue this summer.

Become Involved

Projects for 2016 include grading and trail building at the snowshoe hut, building a woodshed for the CCC cabin, building upper Trail 290, finishing work on the Cook's Cabin historic woodshed, landscaping around the CCC Cabin, restoration of the historic fire lookout attached to the Vista House, and re-vegetating abandoned trails. For volunteer opportunities, be sure to check www.mountspokanetrails.wordpress.com or contact criscurrie22@gmail.com. Visit the Friends Group website at www.mountspokane.org for all things Mt. Spokane and to make donations to the Friends Group. Don't forget to renew your Discover Pass, and get out and enjoy your park!

