

# Klickitat Trail Conservancy

## TRAIL NOTES

Spring 2004

### Klickitat Trail Conservancy Provides New Model For Managing Public Trail

By Bob Hansen, Lyle, WA

**T**his past year has not only seen the birth of the Klickitat Trail Conservancy and the rebirth of the Klickitat trail, but also a new way of thinking about enjoying our public lands.

The Klickitat Trail Conservancy has stepped in and filled a hole left by ever-diminishing public agency resources. Only sixteen months ago, Washington State Parks considered abandoning the Klickitat trail because they lacked the funds to maintain existing parks. State Parks found it hard to justify adding a new park when closing and removing existing parks. However, as of Spring 2004, there is now an improvement plan in place, and talk of abandoning the trail has ended.

One of the key factors in State Parks' decision to open the trail as a park was the formation of the Klickitat Trail Conservancy (KTC), and our group's offer to help manage and operate aspects of the Klickitat trail. This partnership will lighten the financial burden to State Parks' and the public.

The relationship that has evolved between State Parks, the Forest Service and the Klickitat Trail Conservancy may serve as a nationwide model for non-profit organizations to manage public assets on a full-partnership

basis, rather than a contractual or volunteer basis. A full partnership has allowed the Conservancy to work with the public agencies on goal setting, prioritizing and scheduling work, rather than simply being assigned work tasks. This helps make the Klickitat trail a true "public" resource.

#### Volunteers define partnership

To make this new partnership work, Klickitat Trail Conservancy has a dedicated group of individuals working to secure continuous, safe, long-term public use of the entire 31-mile trail. For example, local Board Members Barbara Robinson, Cheryl Steindorf, Jim Minick, Pam Springer and Jim Denton have been leading hikes and introducing people to the Klickitat trail for the past 15 months. Barbara Robinson also coordinates the work committee and leads work parties on a monthly basis.

White Salmon resident Dee Robertson developed a membership database and list serve for the organization. White Salmon residents Shelley Baxter and Brian Griffin are managing our finances. Lyle resident Pam Essley created an excellent website, and keeps it up-to-date for our members. And Lisa Conway, also a Lyle resident, has edited the first edition of the Conservancy's newsletter.

These are only a few examples of volunteers helping with the trail. As we move forward

with making the trail a recreational, environmental and economic treasure for Klickitat County, we need your help. Your energy, professional skills, passions and follow through are needed **right now** to continue improving the Klickitat trail.

Please contact us at (509) 365-2404 or [info@klickitat-trail.org](mailto:info@klickitat-trail.org) to get involved.



Pam Springer routinely patrols for garbage along the Lyle-Fisher Hill section of the trail. Her son Zach (on her back) helps spot trash from his perch.

### SPRING WILDFLOWERS on the Klickitat Trail

By Barbara Robinson, Rowena, Oregon

**S**pring is a glorious time on the Klickitat trail, with wildflowers blooming everywhere. The many different kind of habitat along the trail -- grassy open slopes, wet cliffs, forested glades, gravelly shores -- each sport their own unique flower selection.

The open, grassy slopes along the trail are beautiful in April and May, with large purple lupines, yellow sunflower-like balsamroots, yellow desert parsleys, the dark pink Columbia desert parsley, yellow and cream-colored buckwheats, larkspurs, buttercups, pink phlox, and much more. Slopes with some oaks and ponderosa pines have these flowers too, but as the shade increases, different flowers appear, such as starry Solomon's plume, wild strawberry, shooting stars, Oregon grape, chocolate tips, and chocolate lily.

On rocky wet cliffs you might see stonecrops, pink prairie stars, white saxifrages, little yellow goldstars, and ferns. Along the river shore and the trail's edge are many blooming bushes, especially in mid-May, such

as white mock orange, light blue to white wild lilac (deer brush), pink wild roses, bitter cherry, serviceberry, and ninebark. Sometimes the vines of wild white clematis grow over these. And then there are the happy surprises -- the odd apple tree or clump of lilac showing where a settler used to live, or the Blazing Stars in July in the gravelly flood plain at the dry ice factory site south of Wahkiacus.

I was happily surprised this March to see a large crop of baby California poppies coming up at the Lyle trailhead where soil had been disturbed last year by road construction.

If you are interested in learning about the wildflowers, the book **Wildflowers of the Columbia Gorge**, by Russ Jolley, is the "wildflower bible" for our area. I will be on many of our spring hikes, and am always delighted to point out wildflowers and answer questions.

Hope to see you on the trail! Barbara



# Klickitat Trail Conservancy

www.klickitat-trail.org  
PO Box 512  
Lyle, WA 98635

## Our Mission Statement:

To preserve and promote the public use of the 31 mile Klickitat Trail as a Recreational, Cultural, Natural, Educational, and Economic Asset of Klickitat County.

The Klickitat Trail Conservancy is a non-profit organization.

## Board of Directors:

### President

Bob Hansen, Lyle, WA

### Vice President

Cheryl Steindorf, Klickitat, WA

### Vice President

Pam Springer, Lyle, WA

### Secretary

Jim Minick, Lyle, WA

### Treasurer

Shelley Baxter, White Salmon, WA

## Members at Large

Barbara Robinson.....Rowena, OR  
Dan Lichtenwald.....Goldendale, WA  
Jim Denton.....Hood River, OR  
Joe Kelsey.....Hood River, OR

## Trail Notes

is a publication of the Klickitat Trail Conservancy. Submissions are welcome. Please send pictures, articles or comments to [lisaconway@gorge.net](mailto:lisaconway@gorge.net) or PO Box 512, Lyle, WA 98635



Sign on the range...  
Please obey all signs while using the Klickitat trail.

## CALLING ALL TRAIL SUPPORTERS: Time is money!

The trail is taking shape. 2003 was a whirlwind of activities. Countless volunteer hours were spent in meetings, hundreds and hundreds of pounds of trash and brush were removed from the trail, signs were posted and the trail has become a reality.

However, improvements have only just begun. Jim Minick, secretary for the KTC, recently said, "I feel very strongly that we need to recruit more highly active members, as well as moderately active members, to accomplish our short-term and long-term trail improvement goals. It is a priority for the KTC to bring more "worker bees" into this process".

A few hours of your time will make a difference. Here are some volunteer ideas:

- Pick up litter
- Pull weeds
- Trail maintenance, monitoring and sign posting, recording natural features
- Put up fences
- Data entry and other paperwork
- Logo design or other graphic design projects
- Write articles or take pictures for the newsletter and website
- Grant writing & fundraising events

Please spend **your time** on the trail. Two hours spent pruning brush or removing noxious weeds, the time to take pictures or write an article for the website or newsletter, or your effort to help put up fences or monitor signs along the trail will pay the Klickitat Trail Conservancy dividends for years to come!

If you would like to get involved in any projects, or have other ideas what you would like to do to support the trail, please call Bob at 509-365-2404.



Photo: Jim Denton

Volunteers Barbara Robinson and Joe Kelsey survey a rough section of the Trail. At present, most of the trail bed is old railroad ballast rock, but in some places nature has removed or altered the trail bed. Here, floods have exposed bedrock.

## DISCOVER THE TRAIL @

[WWW.KLICKITAT-TRAIL.ORG](http://WWW.KLICKITAT-TRAIL.ORG)

Just posted:

parking, trail head and trail access information for the following locations



- 4 Highway 14 (Lyle)
- 4 Fisher Hill Bridge
- 4 Pitt
- 4 the town of Klickitat
- 4 Wahkiakus and Swale Canyon
- 4 Harms Road



# EVENTS & HAPPENINGS

## KTC Spring Hikes & Work Parties

KTC hikes are open to everyone. Bi-monthly hikes are usually scheduled the first Saturday and the third Sunday of each month.

Pets are not allowed on KTC event hikes.

### Saturday April 3: Swale Canyon

Hike is 13 miles one way. Car shuttle. Hike or mountain bike the trail. We will have leaders for both hiking and biking. Meet at the Lyle trailhead at 9:00 am.

### Sunday April 18:

#### Fisher Hill Bridge to Pitt

Hike is 8 miles one way. Car shuttle. Meet 12:15 pm at the Lyle trailhead.

### Sunday April 25: Work Party

Meet at 9:00 am at the Lyle trailhead. Call Barbara Robinson, 541-296-5334, for details.

### Saturday May 1: Swale Canyon

Hike is 13 miles one way. Car shuttle. Hike or mountain bike the trail. We will have leaders for both hiking and biking. Meet at the Lyle trailhead at 9:00 am.

### Wednesday May 12: Harms Road East

Hike is 3 miles. A short wildflower and bird watching hike, at the peak of wildflower season. Meet at 10:00 at the Lyle trailhead, or at 10:45 at the Harms Rd. trailhead.

### Sunday May 16:

#### Friends of the Gorge Hike

This hike is limit to 30 participants. Call Barbara Robinson, 541-296-5334, to sign up.

### Wednesday May 26: Work Party

Meet at 9:00 at the Lyle Trailhead. Call Barbara Robinson, 541-296-5334, for details.

### Saturday June 5: Swale Canyon

This hike is 13 miles one way. Car shuttle. Meet at the Lyle trailhead at 9:00 am.

### Sunday June 20: Wahkiakus south to ice plant and mineral spring

This hike is a 3 miles round trip. Meet at Klickitat Town Park, 1 block south and west of the gas station.

### Saturday July 3:

#### Pitt to Fisher Hill Bridge

This hike is 8 miles one way. Car shuttle. Meet at the Lyle trailhead at 9:00 am.



## Family Ramblings *Especially For kids!*

Looking for a “cabin fever reliever”? Head out with your kids to the Klickitat trail for some fresh air and fun! The gentle grade of the trail makes it ideal hiking for preschoolers and young kids, and allows everyone to enjoy some “kid-paced” exercise. The hikes are approximately four miles round trip, and are great for kids in backpacks, sturdy jogging strollers, or for older kids who want to do their own walking.

These slow paced hikes will start at the Lyle trailhead, across from Greg Colt Realty on Route 14 at 11:00 am, and head toward the Fisher Hill Bridge. Call Pam at 509-365-3866 if you need more information. Bring snacks, water, wear sturdy shoes and dress for the weather.

### Spring Hike dates

- ♦ **Friday, April 23**
- ♦ **Friday, May 21**



Photo: Lisa Conway

Ramble on...Zach Martin and Jack Buechler find a stone circle to investigate during a recent Rambling hike.

## Trail Tips

- 4 Stay on the trail right-of-way at all times. Private property borders the trail in many places.
- 4 Cattle – adjacent lands are “open range”. Do not spook cattle with loud noises. Keep you pets on a leash. Be aware that cows will protect their calves.
- 4 Pets – Your pet must be on a leash at all times while using the trail. Pets are not allowed on KTC sponsored events.
- 4 Wear sturdy shoes. The trail is rocky!
- 4 Ticks – you may encounter ticks while hiking. It may help to wear pants, and pull your socks up and over the cuffs. Check yourself and your pets for ticks when you get home. They inhabit the vegetation on the side of the trail. Staying on the trail may help avoid ticks.
- 4 Rattlesnakes – while sightings are rare, they do live along the trail. Watch where you step, they are very well camouflaged! Hiking boots may offer some protection. Give them the right-of-way.
- 4 Poison Oak – it grows abundantly along the edges of the trail. Stay on the trail and you will avoid an unpleasant encounter.



This strange looking devise, found upstream from the Fisher Hill Bridge, is a rotary screw trap. It is used to monitor out-migration of juvenile salmonids from the spawning and rearing areas in the Klickitat basin above the location of the trap. The traps are designed to float in the main channel and capture fish moving downstream. Fish enter the trap through the spinning rotary blades, and are funneled into a box where they are held until the trap is checked.

**Your photo here**

**Send us your photos!  
We may use them on our website or in our newsletter. PO Box 512, Lyle WA 98635  
or [lisaconway@gorge.net](mailto:lisaconway@gorge.net)**

**Your membership is what keeps us going!  
Please renew your annual membership,  
or join today!**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State & Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ \$25 (single)

\_\_\_ \$250

\_\_\_ \$50 (family)

\_\_\_ \$500

\_\_\_ \$100

\_\_\_ other

I am interested in volunteering for trail work \_\_\_\_\_

Please list skills and/or areas of interest :

Return to: KTC, PO Box 512, Lyle, WA 98635

For more trail info, go to [www.klickitat-trail.org](http://www.klickitat-trail.org)

We appreciate your support. Thank you!

**Klickitat Trail Conservancy  
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