

Dedicated to the preservation & promotion of the Klickitat Trail

The Mission of the Klickitat Trail Conservancy (KTC) is 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. KTC is a 501c (3) organization.

Your membership is tax deductible.

Members strongly support the purposes, goals, and objectives of the Klickitat Trail Conservancy.

Trail Notes is a semi-annual publication of the Klickitat Trail Conservancy. Submissions are welcome. Articles, photos and comments can be sent to PO Box 512 Lyle, WA 98635 or emailed to info@klickitat-trail.org.

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Trail Notes

Spring 2012

Funding Dramatically Cut for WA State Parks

Barbara Robinson

The economic downturn of the last few years has hurt WA State Parks especially hard. The current Washington State government has taken the view that State Parks should not be funded out of the general tax funds, but rather should pay its own way through fees charged to park users, rather like turning Parks into a little private enterprise within the government. So far the fees are not producing the projected income, and there have been a number of layoffs of staff. This in turn has created a reshuffling of positions and locations of those remaining. For KTC, this has had large consequences. Three of the four full time State Parks staff we have worked with over the years are now gone, including the head of WA State Parks Eastern Region, the director of Goldendale area and Columbia Gorge parks, and a full time park ranger. State Parks will be very short handed for the foreseeable future, and the help we can give in maintaining the trail is particularly important now.

In addition, key positions for the Columbia

Gorge, National Scenic Area have new faces. A new head of the Forest Service, National Scenic Area was announced in January, and in February, a new director of the Columbia Gorge Commission was chosen. With both Washington State Parks and the National Scenic Area, KTC has a very important role in providing continuity and educating those new to their positions about trail issues and concerns.

Please consider supporting WA State Park in these unfortunate times by buying the \$30 State Parks Pass. You do not need it for the Klickitat Trail, but you do need it for all the parks, such as Doug's Beach, Beacon Rock, and Columbia Hills (Horsethief Lake) State Park. It will also save you a per-day fee of \$10 everywhere in the State.



Time to Renew or Join?

Your membership in the Klickitat Trail Conservancy (KTC) is critical to our success. If you are an existing member of the KTC and would like to continue supporting the Trail, please renew your annual membership today. How are your membership dollars utilized? Here are some of the ways:

- * Enables us to keep you abreast of new Trail developments and happenings via our email listserv, website, and newsletter.
- * Supports our ability to provide portable toilets at trailheads and install new gates and fences.
- * 100% of your annual membership contribution is used to help us continue to preserve and promote public use of the Klickitat Trail.

Spring is KTC's annual membership drive to encourage existing members to continue their support, and encourage new members to join. Whether you are renewing your membership, or are a new member, your support will help to pay for Trail improvement. Your continued support helps keep our mission alive and is GREATLY APPRECIATED.

From the Vice-President | Barbara Robinson

2011 was a banner year for the Klickitat Trail. We celebrated the completion of two major, long awaited improvements - a beautiful new trailhead in Lyle and the decking of the dramatic Fisher Hill Trestle.

The idea for the trailhead started in the late 1990s, when the land along Hwy 14 between the trail (an old railroad right of way) and the Klickitat River came up for sale.

That property had a marvelous view of the Klickitat River, and Nancy Russell, founder of Friends of the Gorge, envisioned a trailhead and wayside there that would also make an attractive entrance to the town of Lyle. She bought the land, and later sold it to Washington State Parks at half of what she paid. The Forest Service, which partners with WA State Parks in managing the first 13.5 miles of the trail, then designed the trailhead, and found money to build it through the Federal Dept. of Transportation. After a lengthy permitting process, building started in spring of 2011. The trailhead is landscaped with native trees and shrubs, and has lovely curving rock walls reminiscent of the Old Scenic Hwy on the Oregon side, which were done by a company in Hood River. There is a rest room, a drinking fountain, and also a lovely view-

point.

The Fisher Hill Trestle, two miles up the trail from Lyle, spans the deep, dramatic Klickitat Canyon. Here salmon fight their way up the little tributary Silvas Creek in spring, and the tribes still do their traditional dip net fishing from platforms for salmon and steelhead. (Please stay on the trail and do not disturb the fishermen!) In 2003 State Parks closed the trestle for safety reasons until it could be decked and a guard rail added. The Forest Service supplied an engineering plan for the work, and with that in hand State Parks applied for Washington State funds to do the project. Again the permitting process was lengthy, but work finally started in Fall of 2011, and your walk up the trail from the new Lyle trailhead will now be rewarded with a spectacular view of the rushing waters of the Klickitat.

In addition to these major achievements, two other projects were done to make the trail experience better. Mile markers were put in by KTC work parties & Forest Service on the first 13 miles of the trail, along with volunteer help from a class of students from Goldendale. Also

more signage was added along roads to help people find the trailheads.

KTC hopes to see you out on the trail enjoying these trail additions!



©Eileen Rock

With lots of snow falling in the lower elevations this winter, Eileen and her husband were able to cross country ski from their home in Lyle to the Klickitat trail.

Tales from the Trail | Ashleigh Coyner



My son on his balance bike...trying to keep up with the big kids.

President's Day 2012

I loaded the van with two bikes, one trainer, one skoot and four very excited children. Our friends had just come in from Vancouver and I was taking them to the Klickitat Trail.

Our first stop was lunch at a local café in White Salmon. After all, if anyone with kids knows, they can get pretty grumpy without food.

Fueled up and ready to go,

the excitement in the van was contagious.

My friend's son was the oldest of the group at 7 and had the biggest bike. My daughter was next at age 6 and second biggest bike. Then there was my friend's daughter with her trainer and my son with the skoot (a balance bike). We had a pretty good range of abilities!

With them all wearing their

helmets, they took off at the trailhead with the oldest boy leading the way. My daughter is pretty good on a bike though she doesn't usually like uneven terrain. Watching her buddy maneuver his bike over the trail, she did great and didn't complain. They all did wonderful and were so excited to be out. This is what I love most about the Klickitat Trail, its ease of use for any ability and of course, its beauty.

The volunteer labor performed by the KTC has been very important to the development of the Klickitat Trail. Not only has our volunteer labor gotten things done on the ground, but it has given KTC and the Klickitat Trail strong support within the hierarchies of the Washington State Parks (WSP's) system. With the cut backs in funding for the WSP's over the last few years our labor has become even more important so anything that we do to increase our exposure at this time is all the more necessary. One of the best way for trail supporters to increase their voice with WSP's and the US Forest Service is to do

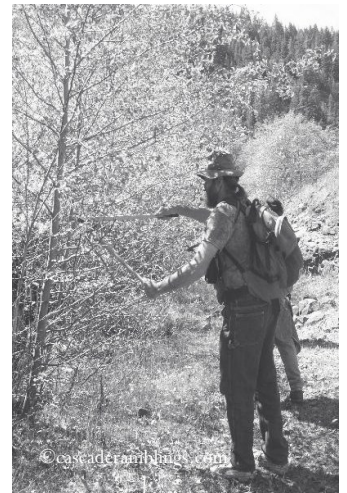
hands on work on the trail. In order to encourage more people to contribute their time and labors to the trail, KTC and WSP's has set up a trail stewardship program for the trail. Under this program individuals, families, and organized groups will take on the responsibility of maintaining specific 2-3 mile sections of the trail. Typically this would mean spending 2 days out on the trail during the spring and another day on the trail during the late summer or early fall. Work would include lopping back the annual vegetation growth, removing loose rocks from the trail bed, pulling invasive weeds and maintaining signs and trail markers

where applicable.

If volunteers are interested in getting recognized for their work, WSP's will post stewardship signs, similar to the Adopt a Highway signs seen along rural road, along to adopted trail area and/or post the information on the trail-head kiosks.

If you are interested in learning more about being a trail steward, please call Jim Denton at 541-354-1604 or Andy Kalinan of WSP's at 509-767-1159.

Training will be provided.



Jim trimming some alders.

SPOTLIGHT: Grass Widows, *Olsynium douglasii*

General: Showy grass-like perennial with clumped stems to 30 cm tall; stems flattened.

Leaves: Narrow (to 3 mm wide), flattened, sheathing at base, lower leaves bract-like.

Flowers: Showy, 1-few in an umbel subtended by two erect spathe-like leaves; tepals 6, to 2 cm long, reddish-purple to pink (rarely white) with a satiny sheen; stamens 3, filaments fused and slightly enlarged at base; styles 3; ovary wholly inferior. Flowering March to June.

Fruit: 3-celled capsules to 1 cm long.

Distinguishing Characteristics: This species is separated from our other *Sisyrinchium* species by its reddish-purple or pink flowers and filaments connate only on the lower 1/3-1/2 of their length (vs. yellow or blue flowers and filaments connate nearly to their tip in our other species).

NOTES: One of our earliest blooming springtime wildflowers, and sure to catch your eye with its large cheerful blooms. **info from <http://biology.burke.washington.edu/herbarium/imagecollection.php?Genus=Olsynium&Species=douglasii>



©BleuOiseau Photography

Birding along the Klickitat Trail Checklist | Ashleigh Coyner



Never too young (or old) to bird!

According to the Falcon Guide, *Birding Washington*, the corridor along the banks of the Klickitat River while bird-rich is one of the least-birded portions of Washington and a natural attraction for adventurous bird-watchers.

The following checklist is of **specialty** birds you may see along the trail.

Happy Birding!

- Greater Scaup
- Golden and Bald Eagles
- Northern Goshawk
- Swainson's Hawk
- Peregrine Falcon
- Chukar
- Northern Pygmy-Owl
- Calliope and Rufous Hummingbirds
- Acorn, Lewis's and Pileated Woodpeckers
- Red-naped Sapsucker
- Hammond's, Dusky, and Pacific-slope Flycatchers
- Cassin's Vireo
- Western Bluebird



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The Klickitat Trail was named by The BestoftheGorge.com as Best Hiking Trail in the Gorge. We couldn't be happier and hope you are too!

Historical Caboose now in Klickitat



©BleuOiseau Photography

Acquired by the Klickitat Historical Museum, the caboose is located right across from the museum. Although the caboose isn't open, you can visit the museum by contacting the Klickitat School District-509-369-4145 or Mike Schlangen 509-369-2040 to schedule an appointment.

The Klickitat Historical Museum has scheduled a caboose workday/potluck for March 25th, beginning in the morning with the potluck starting at 1:00pm.