

May 27, 2021

Dear Members and Supporters of KTC :

It has been a year like no other, for all of us. We, at KTC, hope you and yours are well. I am sure we all are looking forward to getting back to some semblance of normalcy soon. The KTC Board did not meet for several months due to Covid. We are happy to report that we have resumed monthly meetings via Zoom. We are also happy to report the resumption of our quarterly Cooperative Working Group (CWG) meetings, with our wonderful Trail partners, USFS and Washington State Parks. KTC functions as the representative for you, the Public, in this unique three-way partnership, relaying information from the Trail user's point of view.

The Klickitat Trail has seen a dramatic increase in use in the past year. Many folks are coming from other regions and States. We are delighted that one recent visitor to the Klickitat Trail was our Governor, Jay Inslee. Here is what the Governor said on his Twitter account : "I followed my own advice to "Take it Outside" today on the 31 mile Klickitat Trail. What a spectacular part of our State". We found this out from the owner of Canyon Market in Klickitat, who told us that Inslee stopped in the store for a halfway break, and chatted for several minutes. Inslee ended up biking the entire Trail. Now even the Governor knows what a beautiful Trail we have ! We wrote to thank him for visiting, and we encouraged him to advocate for the Trail in the future.

The higher use is partly because of Covid and partly because of the Eagle Creek fire damage in the Western Gorge. There have been days when the Lyle trailhead parking is completely full, and cars are parked along SR142 as overflow. We are all proud that the Trail serves so many, so well, in this challenging time. As you know, the Trail was completely closed to the public for several months last Spring. More frustrating yet, KTC was not even allowed to work on or maintain the Trail during that time. Since the reopening in June, all three partners have worked diligently to play catch up. KTC volunteers were immediately out on the Trail removing rockfall, pruning, weeding, and picking up trash to keep the Trail usable. We also monitored the condition of the trailhead toilets, a potential Covid hotspot. KTC rents portable toilets for two of those trailheads.

KTC is also working to improve signage on the Trail. Due to the increase of new Trail users, we have heard back from several folks who had a hard time seeing the Trail route. This is particularly true at the Pitt trailhead at milepost 10. The Wahkiakus trailhead and North of Fisher Hill bridge are other confusing locations. KTC is partnering with USFS and State Parks to install improved signage. Some new signs are already installed. We will monitor to see if the problems are fixed.

The Forest Service, at our request, recently installed their standard right-of-way courtesy signs at several locations. It is the triangle with arrows, that shows that pedestrians have the ROW over bikes, and that horses have ROW over both. Electric bicycles are now allowed by State

Parks on their trails, including the Klickitat Trail. We felt a special need to make it clear that bikes must yield to both pedestrians and equestrians.

The two major Grants awarded to State Parks for Klickitat Trail improvements in 2016 are moving slowly, but Parks assures us that significant progress is being made on both. We ask Parks for regular updates regarding these projects. The first grant is for finishing the repair and replacement of trestles in Swale Canyon and for building a new parking lot at the Pitt trailhead. A Memorandum of Understanding with the Yakama tribe has been signed that should allow work on the ground to now proceed in Swale Canyon. Hopefully, this MOU will also expedite permitting and approvals for the second grant. This is for replacing the removed trestle across the Klickitat River, one mile upriver from Klickitat, with a new foot and horse bridge. This grant also includes repairing the section of Trail between the town of Klickitat and this new bridge.

We get frequent messages, especially from new users, on how they love getting out on the Trail for their physical and mental health. Your Support of KTC is so important to keep us going strong. We get no funding from other sources. We use your dollars for signs, tools, materials, printing, our website, insurance and other basic expenses. KTC is stepping up right now to pay for several truck loads of gravel to improve the Trail and parking at Pitt. We hope you will consider renewing your support this year, or becoming a new supporter, so we can keep working for the Trail. Without you, there would be no KTC. We love to hear about your experiences on the Trail and to read your reports on conditions or what needs improvement. Thanks so much to all our loyal Members for your support over the past 20 years. If you are a new supporter of KTC, we are delighted to welcome you.

Basic Annual membership is \$25, but any amount you can contribute is greatly appreciated ! You can mail to PO Box 512, Lyle, Wa. 98635, or go to our website, www.klickitat-trail.org to contribute. It would help KTC communicate with you more economically, if you would consider Subscribing to the Mailing List on the website, under Contact Us. KTC commits to sending you six or less emails per calendar year.

The Best to you from the entire KTC Board

Barbara Robinson,

President, Klickitat Trail Conservancy