



Dedicated to the preservation & promotion of the Klickitat Trail

July 28, 2022

Dear Friends of the Klickitat Trail,

This Fall will be the 20th anniversary of the founding of Klickitat Trail Conservancy! Thanks so much to you, our long-time loyal supporters, who have helped us come this far. We are very grateful to our new supporters too, who have discovered this beautiful Trail, and have chosen to join us!

Sunday, July 24, I was out early trying to beat the heat, pulling Yellow Star Thistle and picking up trash near the Fisher Hill Trestle. In the few hours I was there, and in spite of the heat, I saw about 25 Trail users go by me. Most were biking. One couple from Lyle stopped to say hello. A young woman who was hiking said she was from Bend. She came to the Gorge often and loved to use the Trail. It is so gratifying to see so many people enjoying the Klickitat Trail, even on a hot July day. Over the years, we have seen a steady increase in use. Now, when we are out working on the Trail, wherever we are, we almost always see happy Trail users.

The Klickitat Trail has a very exciting development to announce! The Washington State Parks Commission has accepted a proposal to increase the boundary of the Klickitat Trail State Park, to now include the sides of Swale Canyon and the slopes along the Klickitat River north of Klickitat. This action paves the way for State Parks to purchase land, create conservation easements, and make conservation agreements with willing landowners within the new boundary. State Parks is now seeking a grant that would provide money for land or easement purchases.

Swale Canyon and nearby areas along the Klickitat are excellent, pristine oak and pine woodlands with wildflower slopes. It would be wonderful to see some of this preserved. Right now, there is a land rush going on in the area. Swale Canyon could lose its remote, pristine character if land is subdivided, and houses are built along the Swale Canyon rim or down the canyon sides. Oaks are not common in Washington. Klickitat County has the best oak habitat in the state. If some of this can be preserved, it will be a win for the beauty and remote feeling of our Swale Canyon Trail. It will also be a win for a very special ecosystem, and the animals and plants that call Swale Canyon home.

KTC has been hard at work on trail maintenance this Spring and Summer. It was one of the wettest Springs we have seen in recent years. The flowers on the Trail were spectacular! Now the weeds are too. Board member Erik Engelke started the year's Trail work by clearing rockfall all through Swale Canyon in April. Then Jim Denton, our wonderful trail crew boss, held work parties to prune and clear the Trail from Klickitat to the Fisher Hill Trestle. In a first, Washington State Parks has hired someone especially for the Trail this summer. State Parks has been doing a fine job of keeping the Lyle Trailhead mowed and leaving flower spots for KTC to take care of. The flowers made a very colorful show this year! At the upper end of the Trail, the new state parks staff did lots of clearing of willow thickets that had overgrown the final half mile of trail between Uecker Rd and Warwick. Now, for the first time in years, that section is easily passable. We are very grateful to have more State Parks help on the Trail!

Last Fall KTC bought and spread several big loads of gravel for the parking area at Pitt. This year we are planning to buy more gravel for the Pitt trailhead, between where the trail crosses Hwy 142 and the present parking area. Right now, when northbound hikers get to Hwy. 142 at Pitt, they are often confused about where the Trail route is. They aren't sure whether to cross Hwy. 142. We have some signage there now, but if the user also sees a graveled trail on the other side of the road, it should be clear that they should cross. Last year there were piles of logs and brush cluttering that section of trail. But Parks staff cleared the piles and now KTC can do our part and pay to get the gravel in there!

We want to give a big Thank You to Washington State Parks for resolving some recent encroachment problems. In the Trail's early years, illegal "No Trespassing" signs were common. Occasionally they still crop up. A year ago, our Secretary, Jim Minick, hiked up Swale Canyon working on our trail signs. He came upon a large number of illegal "No Trespassing" signs posted right along the Trail. After investigation, State Parks staff removed the signs and notified the landowner of the exact legal boundaries of the Klickitat Trail. In another incident, a landowner in Swale built a shed on Trail property. State Parks informed the landowner of the trail's boundary and made sure the shed was removed.

KTC is very happy to welcome a new board member, Ken Hansen. Ken had a long career in Alaska as an administrator with Federal fisheries laws and management. He has also been involved in creating waterway trails in Alaska. Ken and his wife retired to High Prairie near the upper end of our Trail. Ken started mountain biking the Trail there and fell in love with it. He decided to pitch in and help the Trail by volunteering to serve on our KTC Board. Thank You, Ken, for stepping up!

The KTC Board hopes you will consider renewing your Annual KTC Membership for 2022, so we can continue advocating for and working on the Trail. We get no money from other sources and have no paid staff. We are 100% volunteer. Your dollars are used for special projects like graveled the Trail at Pitt. We also need to meet our basic expenses for work parties, tools, insurance, maintaining the website, printing Trail brochures, and renting portable toilets at the trailheads.

When you are out on the Trail, we would love to get your reports. Please let us know if you see any problems. This Trail is your Trail. When you see a rock or branch in your way or a piece of trash, it helps if you remove it. We hope some of you will join us on work parties, and perhaps consider joining the KTC Board. Basic annual membership is \$25, but any amount you can contribute is greatly appreciated! You can mail a check to:

Klickitat Trail Conservancy
PO Box 512
Lyle, WA 98635

Or you can go to our website, www.klickitat-trail.org to contribute.

It would help KTC communicate with you more efficiently if you would consider joining the eMail Listserv. Go to our website homepage, on the right where it says "Subscribe to our mailing list", and just fill in the boxes below that. KTC commits to sending you very few emails per calendar year.

The Best to you from the entire KTC Board !



Barbara Robinson, President
Klickitat Trail Conservancy