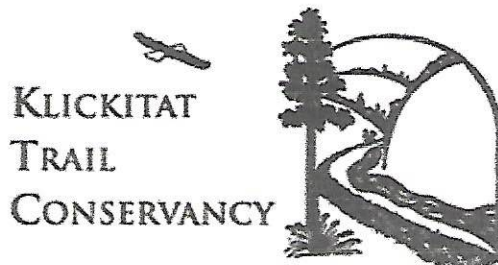


From: Klickitat Trail Conservancy info@klickitat-trail.org
Subject: KTC UPDATE
Date: December 16, 2022 at 2:44 PM
To: barbrob@gorge.net

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Dedicated to the preservation & promotion of the Klickitat Trail

Dear KTC Friends and Supporters,

Thank you so very much for your support over the years. It is your support that has enabled KTC to fight for this Trail and be effective! Klickitat Trail Conservancy (KTC) turned 20 this year, and what a difference 20 years has made. In 2002 we were an informal group walking a very controversial Trail with the possibility of being arrested by the County. We went to a Washington State Parks Commission meeting where the new State Parks Director wanted to close the Trail. We offered \$5000 to State Parks towards Trail maintenance without knowing where we would get it. They voted to keep the Trail open, and we raised the money. We had many strenuous work parties to take a neglected, overgrown, rock strewn rail-bed that had been ravaged in places by the '96 flood and make it walkable. We have stories of the dead car, the four dead deer, the many illegal "No Trespassing" signs, the warning shots, our work on the trestles, putting up signboards, defending the trail legally, and so much else from those early years.

Now, like a person turning 20, the Trail is reaching maturity. In the last few years there has been a big increase in Trail use. When we are out on the Trail working, we see hikers and bikers all the time. The start of the Trail in Lyle is now a beautiful trailhead with rock walls and a viewpoint. At first KTC did all the landscape maintenance for the trailhead but in the last few years State Parks

and the Forest Service have stepped up and are keeping it maintained. KTC still does lots of weeding and trash pickup. The spectacular trestle over the Klickitat River at Fisher Hill, a mile and a half up from Lyle, has been beautifully decked. The Trail from Lyle to Fisher Hill has been resurfaced with fine gravel. Besides Lyle, we have trailheads 10 miles up the Trail at Pitt, 16 miles up the Trail at Wahkiacus where Swale Canyon starts, and 29 miles up the Trail at Harms Rd, at the head of Swale Canyon. There are signage and portapotties at all these trailheads. KTC pays for two of these three portapotties. Early this year State Parks staff made the last half mile of the Trail between Warwick and Uecker Road walkable by clearing brush. And this summer Klickitat County paved part of the Trail in the town of Klickitat so that kids could safely ride their bikes from the school to the activity center.

We thank the Forest Service and State Parks for getting grants and funding for the large projects! KTC lobbies for the large projects and does smaller projects that Trail users let us know are needed. Perhaps most importantly, we always work on basic trail maintenance to keep the Trail usable. In the last two years, in response to people letting us know they were getting confused on the Trail, we have put up trail signs and also encouraged State Parks and the Forest Service to improve signage. State Parks now has a plan to put up carsonite markers every mile on the Trail and also at intersections. We think that will be a very helpful addition to the Trail!

The Pitt Trailhead was a very confusing part of the Trail for hikers, and the large gravel parking area was full of potholes. Two years ago KTC took on the Pitt Trailhead as a special project. We added signage in several places to make it clear where the Trail was. In addition KTC paid for 8 large truckloads of gravel for graveling the parking area. This August we spread an additional 2 loads of gravel on the Trail from the parking area to where the Trail crosses Hwy 142 at Pitt. The total cost of gravel and signs was around \$3,500. This gravel makes it obvious there is a Trail there. When hikers from Lyle get to Pitt, they can see a graveled Trail across the road and know to cross the road.

The Trail's two large State Parks grants have been making progress. A contractor hopefully will be chosen for the Swale Canyon trail work in February and the work will be done in 2023.

But if there are delays, KTC is considering doing some surfacing work in Swale ourselves. If you have walked or ridden Swale canyon, you know there are about five stretches of rough, raw rail ballast rock that are unpleasant to walk or ride on. KTC's idea is to put about a two foot wide strip of finer gravel through those stretches so people can get across them more comfortably.

KTC's top priority project is the "Bridging the Gap" grant that will build a bridge across the Klickitat River where State Parks took down a trestle in 1996. A consultant is now under contract who will work on bridge design alternatives, so progress is being made. That bridge is terribly important, because right now anyone wanting to do the whole Trail has to walk or ride Hwy 142 for three miles, from the Horseshoe Bend Bridge to the town of Klickitat, and that is dangerous. With a bridge, through-hikers and bikers could take the lovely trail on the other side of the river to get to the bridge. You can do that trail now as an out-and-back trail and it is well worth it, but it dead-ends at the missing Suburbia Trestle.

In our July membership renewal letter we were excited to announce that State Parks had adopted a proposal to increase the boundaries of the Klickitat Trail State Park near the town of Klickitat and in Swale Canyon. That creates the possibility of land acquisition and conservation easements along the Trail. State Parks has now applied for a grant to fund land acquisition, and we are very happy to tell you that the grant application received a high rating in the competition for grant funding. At this point there is a good chance of getting the grant!

A concern for the Trail is Klickitat County's newly elected County Commissioner, who in the past has sometimes been an opponent of the Klickitat Trail. We hope that seeing the benefits of the Trail to the community and local economy may have softened that point of view. We would be glad to welcome the new commissioner as a friend of the Trail.

In Spring we welcomed Ken Hansen to the KTC board, and this Fall we welcome another new board member, Annick Chaler. Annick worked at Bonneville Power for years and now is a consultant to power companies. An avid cyclist, she travels outside the US to ride in competitions. She lives in Lyle and the Klickitat Trail is part of her constant training. She has ridden Swale

Canyon at least 11 times. Because she is on the Trail so often, she can report problems and fix them. Today she showed me photos of branches and rocks she had removed, and reported a problem with a big rock. We are delighted to have Annick on board!

It is your contributions that make projects like the signage and graveling at Pitt possible. It is also your support that allows us to continue basic Trail maintenance, such as renting portapotties and buying equipment. This year we are also paying a consultant to improve and update our website. Our regular membership drive will be in late Spring, but if you feel like giving an extra donation for the Holiday Season we would be very grateful!

You can make a contribution by mailing a check to: Klickitat Trail Conservancy, PO Box 512, Lyle, WA, 98635. You can also contribute by going to our website: www.klickitat-trail.org

We hope to see you hiking, biking, or horseback riding on our beautiful Klickitat Trail. The Trail is good in Winter, and with enough snow you can even cross-country ski it. Thank you again for your wonderful support that keeps us going. See you on the Trail very soon! Happy Holidays and Best Wishes,

Barbara Robinson, KTC President

All KTC Events are open to the Public.

No Smoking or Dogs on KTC-sponsored events

Visit these links for more info:

[Trail Use Guidelines](#) :: [Directions to Main Trailheads](#)

Enjoy !

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