

DNR Recreation News

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March 2008



The Power of DNR Volunteers

Without the contributions of our talented and generous volunteers, the Department of Natural Resources would not be able to deliver the quality recreation program we all enjoy today. Currently, our annual operating budget is approximately \$2.0 million. This consists of \$1.4 million from the Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities (NOVA) program, \$500,000 from the state General Fund and a one-time allotment of \$450,000 for 2008 and 2009 to develop recreation plans for the Reiter Foothills block and Ahtanum State Forest, and to develop and implement statewide recreational sign standards.

Each year dedicated volunteers contribute more than \$950,000 worth of donated labor in direct support of

safe, sustainable recreation opportunities across the state. This represents almost half of our annual recreation budget. We are able to use these hours as match for more than \$850,000 in grants to support maintenance and planning along the I-5 corridor. Our success in competing for maintenance grants in less populated areas of the state is limited, and we depend heavily on volunteers to help keep facilities and trails open.

This issue of the *DNR Recreation News* is dedicated to highlighting the value and generosity of our volunteers. Please pass it along to your friends. If you have any thoughts or comments regarding the Department of Natural Resources' Recreation Program, please send an e-mail mark.mauren@dnr.wa.gov, or call me at (360) 902-1047.



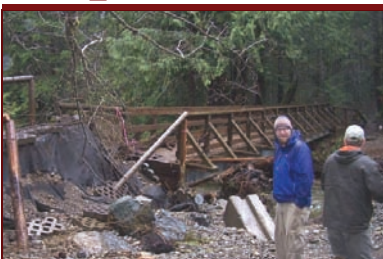
Mike helps at the Capitol Forest annual gravel pack-in.

Kudos to Mike Lentz

DNR Recreation staff would like to recognize volunteer Mike Lentz. Mike has been the Project Coordinator for the Nicholson Horse Trails the past two years. He is a current member of the Pierce County Chapter of Backcountry Horsemen of Washington. He joined the BCHW

and Western Washington Longears Club 12 years ago. As a passionate horse owner, Mike's participation in BCHW and work on the trails not only insures he has a place to ride, but the next generation will as well. Thank you, Mike, for all the motivation you give and all the work you do for the Department.

A Special Thanks to Storm Cleanup Volunteers!



Staff and volunteers survey storm damage in the Tahuya.

season opening on **April 1**.

In the Tahuya and Green Mountain State Forests, numerous clubs, concerned individuals, and DNR personnel were able to reopen many of the damaged trails and complete the assessment of 183 miles of trails.

The storm of December 3 brought damage and flooding all over western Washington. Since then, volunteers have been busy assisting recreation staff in storm damaged areas to maintain access and prepare for the

On behalf of DNR, Commissioner of Public Lands Doug Sutherland extends special appreciation to the following groups and individuals for coordinating and participating in storm damage cleanup work parties: Cascade Family Motorcycle Club, Tacoma Trail Cruisers, Puget Sound Enduros, multiple chapters of the Back Country Horsemen of Washington (BCHW), Friends of Capitol Forest, Bremerton Cruisers, Northwest Motorcycle Association, Quadrapaws, Tacoma Motorcycle Club, Washington Family ATV, Cascade Family Motorcycle Club, Tahuya Christian Horsewomen, numerous volunteer Forest Watch members led by Herb Gerhardt and many other groups and individuals.

Volunteer Opportunities



The success of the Recreation Program depends upon the thousands of hours contributed by our dedicated volunteers.

- Friends of Capitol Forest hosts work parties on the first Saturday of every month.

Anyone can participate. For more information, contact Jim Graham at jim@capitolforest.com.

- DNR will be holding volunteer work parties from **March through May** at Woodland Campground, Cold Creek Campground, Merrill Lake Campground, Bradley ORV Trail, Dougan Campground, Jones Creek Trail, and Tunerville Campground. Large-scale volunteer events for these areas will include National Trails Day in **June** and National Public Lands Day in **September**. To volunteer in this area, please send an e-mail to jessica.kimmick@dnr.wa.gov
- Join the Pierce County Chapter of Backcountry Horsemen of Washington (BCHW) on the following

dates for Nicholson Horse Trail System projects and campground cleanup: March 29, **April 26**, and **June 7** (National Trails Day). For more information, call Mike Lentz at 253-847-4009.

- The spring cleanup weekend for Elbe Hills ORV Campground is on **April 26-27**. Call Joe Wittig at 253-722-6708 for more information on this work party and for other volunteer opportunities in Elbe Hills.
- Volunteers are needed for two **May 3** events: a cleanup at Beverly Dunes, and the annual Wagons & Wildflowers event at Columbia Hills Natural Area Preserve, co-hosted by DNR's Natural Areas Program and Columbia Hills State Park. To be added to the volunteer contact list, call the SE Region office at 509-925-8510, or send an e-mail to christine.redmond@dnr.wa.gov.
- The Reiter Trails Cleanup is on **Sunday, May 4**. Orientation begins at 9 a.m. in the main parking area off Reiter Rd. BBQ will be provided for lunch, and there will be a group ORV ride in the afternoon.

What's New?

Legislative Update

The Department's Recreation Study Bill passed unanimously, and the Governor is expected to sign it. For the final text of bill go to <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/documents/billdocs/2007-08/Pdf/Bills/House%20Passed%20Legislature/2472-S.PL.pdf>.

The study bill group will make recommendations to the Legislature on sustainable funding, coordination with user groups, and compatibility by December 2009 or sooner.

We requested and received additional capital funds to repair damage to trails and facilities caused by the December storm. Plans are underway to make repairs as soon as possible.

This spring we will begin to develop the capital and operational budget proposals for the 2009 – 2011 biennium. Look for more on this in the next issue.

Comprehensive Sign Standards

We are developing a Sign Standards and Guidelines Manual to help unify land management and recreation signs on DNR-managed lands. The manual will include standards and guidelines for regulatory, safety/advisory, and directional/ informational signs. Sign standards will describe the types of signs needed for recreational purposes on trails, at trailheads, campgrounds, winter snow-parks and ski trail signs, at forest entries, and on gates and roads. The work should be completed by the end of July. The new signs will be installed first in the Tahuya and Capitol State Forests.

New DNR Website

After months of hard work, our website has been redesigned to make it more user-friendly. The web is one of the tools we use to inform you about open/closed recreational areas, planning efforts, trail maps and much more. We encourage you to visit the new site at www.dnr.wa.gov. If you have a suggestion or wish to comment, send an e-mail to webproject@dnr.wa.gov.

Region Updates and Projects

South Puget Sound Region

King, Kitsap, Lewis, Mason, Pierce Counties

Upcoming Events

May 3-4: The National Association of Competitive Mounted Orienteering will host an event on the Nicholson Horse Trails.

May 17, July 19, and September 20: Pierce County Sheriff's Mounted Posse will host three Poker Rides on the Nicholson Trails.

All events will stage at the Sahara Creek Campground.

Pacific Cascade Region

Clark, Cowlitz, Grays Harbor, Lewis, Pacific, Skamania, Thurston, Wahkiakum Counties

Upcoming Events

- On **May 1**, the Yacolt Burn State Forest will be re-opened to ATV use on designated trails.
- Merrill Lake Campground will be re-opened for the summer season at the end of **April**, weather permitting.
- Dougan Campground will also be re-opened to the public this **spring**, thanks to new campground hosts, Robert and Tammy Gilbert.
- Cold Creek Campground will also be opened to the public early **summer**, thanks to returning hosts, Jeannie and Kevin David and family.



Commissioner Sutherland chats with volunteer at the pack-in.

Help is on the way

We are pleased to announce that Russ McCabe joined us as the new Summit Unit Recreation Manager in Capitol State Forest on March 3. We are looking forward to bringing on a second recreation technician in the south part of the region this spring. This non-permanent position will work primarily on our non-motorized trails and is grant funded for the next 18 to 20 months.

Yacolt Planning

The Western Yacolt Burn Recreation Plan is progressing well. This spring, the planning committee will learn

about the scientific suitability analysis that is conducted as part of the planning for recreation trails and sites.

Region Hosted Two Very Successful March Events

Capitol State Forest held the Third Annual Great Gravel Pack-In on March 1. This event brings together volunteers and their stock animals to haul gravel for trail tread repairs on the non-motorized trail system in Capitol State Forest.

Our region held the First Annual DNR ORV Summit on March 15, at the Straddleline ORV Park. This event was sponsored by the DNR Law Enforcement Services and provided opportunities for visitors to participate in interactive demonstrations, obtain safety information, participate in a work party, enjoy a free lunch and "score some freebies!"

Northwest Region

Island, King, San Juan, Skagit, Snohomish, Whatcom Counties

Reiter

The Reiter Foothills recreation planning process has begun. More than 140 people attended the kick-off meeting on February 12, and the Reiter Foothills Recreation Planning Committee will hold its first meeting at the end of March.

The goal for the plan is to guide recreation management for the 10,000-acre block of forested state trust land located between Sultan and Index, and sandwiched between Highway 2 and the Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest, known as the Reiter Foothills area. A number of people have volunteered to help with the trail inventory that will begin this spring. For more information, contact David at reiterfoothills@dnr.wa.gov.

Northeast Region

Ferry, Lincoln, Okanogan, Pend Oreille, Spokane, Stevens Counties

We are coordinating with our user groups on work to be done in the Little Pend Oreille (LPO) area, so they can be ready when the snow melts. Call (509) 684-7484 for more information.

In **April**, user groups in the Okanogan area are coming together to discuss and prioritize work in and around the Loomis State Forest.

A sportsmen's group from the west side of the state plans to work **Memorial Day weekend** at the Sportsman's Camp campground.

Southeast Region

Adams, Asotin, Benton, Chelan, Columbia, Douglas, Franklin, Garfield, Grant, Kittitas, Klickitat, Lincoln, Skamania, Walla Walla, Whitman, Yakima

Volunteers Needed for Trail Inventory in the Ahtanum State Forest

The Ahtanum State Forest (ASF) recreation planning process is underway. More than 100 people attended the kick-off meeting on February 11, and the Ahtanum Recreation Planning Committee held its first meeting at the end of March. The goal for the plan is to guide recreation management for the ASF, a block of 77,000 forested acres of state trust land located about 20 miles west of Yakima. Volunteers are needed to help inventory trails in the area. For more information, call Eric Watrud at 509-925-8510 or send an e-mail to asfplan@dnr.wa.gov.

Congratulations to BCHW

The Backcountry Horsemen of Washington held their 2008 Jubilee and Annual Meeting in Ellensburg March 21-23. Our region had a booth at the event to share information about recreation and the DNR.

Olympic Region

Clallam, Grays Harbor, Jefferson, Mason

Volunteer Activities

In August the International Mountain Bicycling Association's (IMBA) Trail Care Crew visited Port Angeles. The visit was co-hosted by the Olympic Dirt Society (a local mountain bike group) and DNR. The crew put on a two-day trail maintenance and construction seminar, plus an evening session about effectively working with land managers. Port Angeles was one of only two stops in Washington for the Trail Care Crew in 2007. Twenty-three volunteers attended the training, and interests ranged from hiking, to horseback riding, ORV riding, and, of course, mountain biking.

A section of trail in the Sadie Creek area was relocated to facilitate road construction for a timber sale. Members of Just Jeep Junkies worked with the forester responsible for the sale layout to flag the new trail location. DNR does not receive any recreation funding to support this facility. The Sadie Creek 4x4 trail is maintained under an Adopt-A-Trail agreement through the efforts of the 4x4 community.

Murdock Beach is in the beginning stages of a project with a local Eagle Scout to construct two log-stringer bridges to improve access.

A Note of Caution This Spring

DNR staff, crews and volunteers are working to clear trails and facilities of storm debris as quickly and efficiently as possible, as we prepare trails and facilities for our season opening on April 1. As you head into the forest, please be especially aware that, due to extreme weather events this winter, many sites and conditions have changed. Please exercise caution and report concerns to your local region.



Backcountry Horsemen help check and repair trails.

Unauthorized Trail Under Discussion

Region staff are in the early stages of bringing together the land management agencies (state and county), private forest landowners, and interested parties to address a trail built without landowners' permission. This trail is located in the Chimacum area south of Port Townsend.

Washington Conservation Corps

Salute to Volunteers

As we salute our volunteers in this issue, we extend our gratitude for the opportunities we've had over the years to work side by side with various groups and individuals. In addition to the great work that is accomplished, our Corpsmembers have the experience of learning from you, the users, about the various activities that take place on DNR-managed lands.

We are currently operating five year-round crews in King, Skagit, and Thurston Counties, and we are gearing up to start three additional seasonal crews in Klickitat, Kittitas, and Spokane Counties.

Interested adults (ages 18 to 25) can obtain information at www.washingtonconservationcorps.org, or by contacting the WCC Program Director, Kirk Thomas, at (360) 902-1645 or kirk.thomas@dnr.wa.gov.



WCC Corpsmembers working with landowner to repair fence for big game management.

DNR Recreation Web Page: www.dnr.wa.gov/RecreationEducation/Recreation/Pages/Home.aspx
To be added or removed from mailing list, send e-mail anna.jones@dnr.wa.gov