

WATERSHED COMMITTEE MEETING (Greenbelt)

Minutes for February 13th, 2010

Attending members: Mary Bunney, Jeanne Whitlow and co-chairs Doug Pendleton and Tim Abel

Called the meeting to order at 1:42 PM.

CO-CHAIRS

Lots of excitement over the new direction of the old Greenbelt Committee. We are tentatively calling this the Watershed Committee as it uses language that outside organizations can identify more readily. The name has not been officially recognized by the board and the motion that this committee be co-chaired is also pending but met with enthusiasm by board members and attendees. The idea is that Doug Pendleton will focus on the river aspects of our open spaces while Tim Abel will continue to focus on the Greenbelt areas. This way the groundwork for the exciting new addition of the Wenatchee River to our scope of duties can be laid while we continue to operate our Greenbelt zones with new and improved activity/fun/functional outings. It is our hope to gear up the river education/activities/workparties in the same way once that end of our new focus is more clearly defined. Tentatively we toyed with our own mini Salmon-fest with river floats combined with river clean-up and a picnic in the park afterwards. This is just one of many events river-wise we hope to have in place by late summer, next spring at the latest.

TRAILS

Our entire meeting was devoted to the topic of events, but not overlooked are the projects we hope to complete this year. There are currently two new trails proposed: One which cuts through the greenbelt from Stirrup between Arabian and Shetland, then exits/enters at upper Shetland. We hope to punch a connecting trail to join Balsamroot from this trail but this may be next season's project. Also scheduled is a branch trail from upper Lupine (we refer to this trail in this planning stage as the Viewpoint Trail). This trail would not only serve as a great overlook with a beautiful vista over the Wenatchee River, but would help solve another task we've been trying to resolve, getting the three benches out of the warehouse and planting them in the ground somewhere. We've decided a bench at this location would be a fantastic place to meditate or rest on the steep climb up to Riata, possibly conjoining a shorter trail to connect to Riata near the bench. Mary Bunney brought up the hope that one day, at least one of our trails would become wheelchair-accessible and this viewpoint would be an ideal candidate for this purpose as it is a simple and short stretch from parking on Riata. Wheelchair access is not a priority this season but it is an idea for the near future. Should we become ambitious enough and get more volunteering, we hope to connect the isolated Bridge Trail with our current trail system via a trail under the powerlines and back through Greenbelt land behind Thoroughbred, Bronco and Bridle. This would also open up the Powerline Beach, a long and usually deserted stretch of wonderful riverfrontage that stretches nearly to Plain. This project, like the wheelchair-accessibility project, is not our focus this year but continues to move closer to the forefront.. Should we get some sort of rudimentary trail constructed this year the task for next year, obviously, would not be nearly as daunting.

ISSUES

Really only one outstanding issue, this regarding people cutting through a yard on Saddle to access river frontage. We will meet with the homeowner in March (when the snow is gone) and see what can be done to help..

A motion that we, as Watershed members, be issued some sort of vests when we go tromping out through the reserve in carrying out some sort of limbing/brushing/trail construct/repair jobs

seemed to be a good idea. This would serve as some sort of identifier, helping to remove some cloud of suspicion as to those strange people out there in the reserve hacking and cutting and constructing trails. A vest could identify someone out there on official business, especially if the job to be done has but one person volunteering to do it. We will look into the expense of such an item for this purpose but it should be minimal.

EVENTS/WORK PARTIES

Many of our past meetings have been discussions regarding lack of participation by community members. We discussed possible reasons for lack of participation in past work parties in hopes of finding ways of improving participation by more members, especially those who enjoy our greenbelts. A motion was made to set times for each event/work party. This way anyone wanting to help out will know what part of their day we would hope to have their company and brawn. We all nodded at a 9 AM - 12 noon timeline, but this was not etched in stone. We will try out our first few trail parties this season in this time frame, hoping that more people will know we will not dictate their entire day and their weekend 'away-from-it-all'. Tag teamed with these work parties are fun events, the first being planned for Saturday, April 20th from 9-Noon. This will be a loop walk on our trails mainly to introduce those people unaware of their existence coupled with wildflower identification and minor trail repair/brushing. Anyone, friends and family are welcome to come! We will discuss identification of wildflowers and indigenous plants, their past uses and other interesting facts. Come learn about our trail system, our whacky Watershed people and our native flowers/plants! Should be lots of fun! Anyone who would like to lead one of these walks please contact me, Tim @ 763-0552. I know we have more educated people on this topic than I, and in the event we have enough interest, we can try to put a 2nd showing the following day, Sunday, April 21st from 9-Noon!

UPCOMING EVENTS

March 20th (Spring begins!): Trail work on the proposed new trails, mainly the Stirrup to Shetland trail. This is if snow permits (and it should). We'll discuss evergreen trees and hand out dichotomous keys so that you can go identify most all of the evergreens in the Ponderosa on your own walks. This event will take place immediately following our Watershed Committee meeting, scheduled for 8 AM this same day. Meeting @ 8 AM followed by 9-noon trail work.

April 17th: Introduction to the Ponderosa Trail System/Wildflower walk. Meet at the office at 8 for the Watershed Meeting or 9 for the event. The event will cover 2 miles of walking with frequent stops and be over by noon.

May 15th: Introduction to noxious weeds & invasive weed species. Come along and find out what Knapweed, among others, looks like. Help pull the nasty stuff, learn about its habits and why it is one of our most dangerous weeds we have here in the Ponderosa. Help pull it, sack it and haul it down to the burn pile. (Burn pile is May 22nd).

May 16th: Bird walk and Viewpoint Trail construct. Learn our birds, pull knapweed along the way and spend an hour or so working on our new Viewpoint Trail! We hope to place a bench at its terminus after we complete the trail. Come see the view before it becomes too popular!

In June we hope to talk Fire Safety and combine that with tree limbings and working with the Fire Department on some sort of Fire Safe Zone plan. In July and August we'd like to turn more river-oriented, culminating in events like fly-casting, river-floating and clean-up. More events planned and we are always looking for anyone specializing in fields that can lead walks (bugs, plants, river, weather, birds... experts!) We hope to make these annual events and get experts outside the Ponderosa involved. These are all ambitious plans and all my not come to fruition.

These first few events will test the waters, so to speak. We hope you will find them fun, enjoyable, educational and intrinsically valuable. Hope to see you March 20th!

Meeting was adjourned @ 3:00 PM

Next meeting is scheduled for March 20th, 8 AM.