

FLSRV Newsletter



June
2014

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Annual Meeting

Many of us enjoyed our Annual Meeting on February 22nd at Wandermere Golf Course Club House. We had a presentation and slide show by Lindell Haggin about the animals and birds that inhabit our river valley. We were so impressed with the story and photos that we asked her to prepare an article to put into this newsletter.

Board members Lindell Hagen, Kirk Neumann, Tina Wynecoop, and Jack Bury were re-elected for another 2 year term.

After the meeting we enjoyed a buffet dinner and conversation with friends and neighbors.

A big thanks to Lance Pounder's son, Max, who assembled and organized the silent auction items; great job, Max.

List of Contributors

Ed Anderson- UPS
Diane Konkright- Flowers Under Glass
Tammie Goulet- Starbucks
Kathy Maguire- Postnet
Ron Janney
Rick and Sue Kellogg (Nike rimless sunglasses with golf tint and sweet dreams cup cakes)
Country Store
Tammie Goulet
Ed Anderson
Carwash Plaza
Roberta Ellis
Tina wynecoop
Oil Can Henry's
Yuppy Puppy
Richard m Yarbrow
Harla Jean Biever
Pounders Jewelry
Birders
The Newmans
Bill Ross
Carol Walker
Lance Pounder Excavation

Beavers on the Little Spokane River

Ro Bury

I thought it was a small bear perched on the ice shelf that jutted into the Little Spokane River. It was dark brown and black in color and moved slowly across the ice and up onto the shore. Since we had never seen beavers (or evidence of beavers) on our property in the 25 years we have lived here, it was a surprise when the view through the binoculars showed a broad, flat tail attached to the back of the animal. Beavers are America's largest rodent, and the adults are up to 4 feet long and 60 pounds. This guy was at the extreme end!

Further investigation revealed a well-concealed lodge just upstream from the sighting. Most lodges are made up of sticks and mud and can be up to 10 feet tall. They usually have 1 large, central chamber and 1 or 2 entrances. The floor of the chamber is a little above the water line and covered with wood chips to absorb moisture. The chamber is vented for fresh air. Some beavers build burrows in the banks of rivers ("bank dens") and may or may not build lodges over them. "Our" beavers had a "bank den" with a small lodge over the top. One family may have several lodges or dens at any given time.

We had periodic sightings over the next few years; usually the beavers were swimming down the river. There were

various sizes, and we assumed we were looking at the male and female and 2 year olds most of the time.

In the spring of about 2010, the river was exceptionally high and running fast. We saw that the lodge was halfway underwater and worried about the beaver family. After the water levels dropped, we noticed a fairly large tree coming down the river. As we got closer, we saw there was an adult beaver on either end of the tree, deftly navigating it around the bend and away from the shoreline where it might get hung up. As they rounded the last bend, we were happy to see they were apparently busy building a new lodge.

In 2012, my husband and I were standing near the shoreline near a large bull pine when we noticed a 12 inch baby beaver come onshore. It sniffed its way toward us, apparently looking for grass shoots. The little guy didn't

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Friends of Little Spokane River Valley, Inc.

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contact Harla Jean Biever

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In Memoriam

DIANA MOBERLY

*An Englishwoman in the
Little Spokane River Valley*

Drama on the Little Spokane

Lindell Haggin

On a cold and icy day in February, I happened to look out the window toward the river. The water seemed to be roiling more than usual when an otter popped up and onto a shelf of ice. In its mouth it was



carrying a large fish, more than a foot long. After taking a few bites it hopped back in the river. I thought I had seen the last of it, when it hopped back on the ice shelf. It repeated this process two or three times. I thought maybe it was like a raccoon and was washing its meal between bites. The next thing I know a bald eagle flew into the picture. It perched on a nearby



cottonwood. The otter positioned itself between his big meal and the eagle. The eagle made a dive down toward the otter and the fish, but the otter was too fast for it. The otter took its treasured meal into the dark waters. The eagle was very disappointed, but finally spied a little morsel left on the ice and went to retrieve it.



About an hour later there were three otters on the ice shelf. No fish, no eagle, just a



little time to catch up on grooming.

All but the last photo were taken from our upstairs window looking down toward the river. For the photo of the three otters, I went down to the river bank to get a closer view.

How fortunate we are to live in a river valley with such richness and diversity. We all need to do our part to enjoy it and help take care of it.

- Beavers / Continued from page 1 -

notice us until he was directly in front of us. He stood up on his back legs, sniffed the air, looked at us and jumped about 20 feet before running back into the river!

In 2013, a large piece of an old cottonwood tree fell in our back yard. It was very cold and close to the first snowfall so we decided to leave it there for the winter. All winter long, the beavers visited the main trunk and the broken branches. We weren't sure if they were taking parts back to the lodge or what. This spring, it was obvious they had been nibbling on the bark and the cambium (or soft tissue that grows under the bark). We



know they also eat roots, buds, grasses and other water plants. They have ingenious ways of hauling small branches and trees and storing them in or near their dens for use during the winter.

We are so fortunate to live on the river where we can observe the wildlife up close. The beavers are at the very top of our favorite river animals!

OTHER INTERESTING BEAVER FACTS:

- Beavers mate for life (but a replacement will be found if one dies).
- Gestation lasts a mere 3 months. The kits can swim within 24 hours of birth and stay with the parents for 2 years.
- They can live up to 20 years.
- Beavers live in colonies made up of the breeding male, female and kits up to 2 years old.
- They coat their fur with castoreum, an oily secretion from the scent glands.
- There is a thick layer of fat under the skin that keeps the beavers warm underwater.
- The long upper and lower incisor teeth are used to cut into trees and woody vegetation. • The teeth grow throughout the beaver's life.
- Beavers live throughout North America except Florida, the desert Southwest, Mexico and the Northern most parts of Canada.
- Positive impacts on the environment include creation of new wetlands that slow erosion, raise the water table and help purify the water.
- Negative effects include silt build-up behind dams that slow the flow of water and can cause low lying areas to flood.

For further information, see the Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife website. "Living with Wildlife" offers some ideas on how to install barriers on trees, beaver-resistant plants and repellents.



What Was In Grandpa's Trunk

Harla Jean Heiser Bieber

Being an only child I became sole heir to my Grandparent's home in Chadron, Nebraska, when my mother passed away in 1985. My daughter, Lisa, and I went into that home and were swept into the past as we sorted through all the belongings stored in the basement and in the attic. We found many treasures; one of them brings us to our publishing this book. Stored away in an old trunk in the attic we found numerous photographs of Sioux Indians, the Wounded Knee Massacre, the 7th Cavalry, and the Pine Ridge Reservation. I am uncertain exactly how Grandpa came to own these photographs. Some of the major photographers of the time had studios in Chadron, and friends who knew of his interest in the events of the late 1800's may have sent some of these photos to him. So, his private collection became our private collection and since 1985 we've considered how best to preserve the photographs for coming generations. We finally decided to publish a book to share the photos of this historic era with others who have a like-minded interest. Most of the photos are now 125 years old.

Board members Jack Bury and Tina Wynecoop, were valuable advisors as Lisa and I worked our way through the self-publishing process. Our dear friend, Jack Nisbet, wrote this foreword:

"These photographs from a grandfather's attic shine glaring light on the reality of the Dakota country's early reservation period. With clear organization and minimal prose, the authors let the prints tell a story full of cruelty, bitterness, and surprising human warmth."

Jack Nisbet, author of Sources of the River and The Collector.

Because many members of the Friends of the Little Spokane River Valley have a deep interest in history, I asked and received permission from the board to acquaint you with our book and offer it for sale. We will donate 10% of the profits to FLSRV.



Wounded Knee & Sioux Reservations c. 1890 *Photographs from Grandpa's Trunk* The Elmer Clay Byerly Collection



Harla Jean Heiser Bieber and Lisa Bieber Pechia

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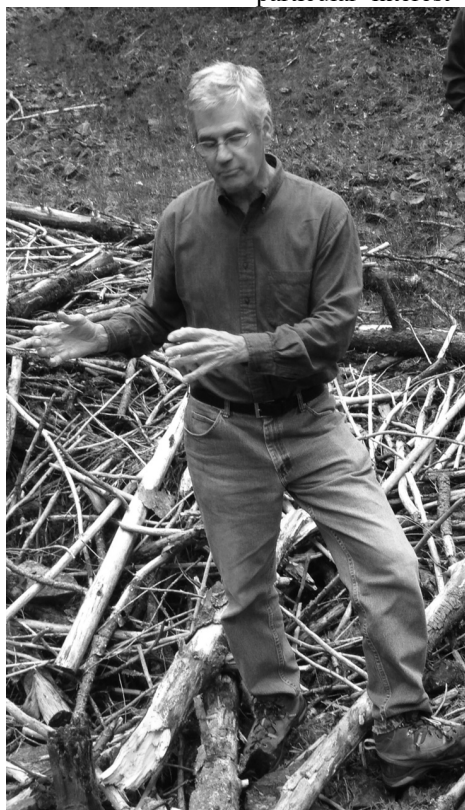
**Ice Caves, Cultural Sites, Flora,
Fauna And Geology:
The Third Annual FLSRV Hike With
Naturalist, Author Jack Nisbet**

(And we're already planning next year's hike!)

Tina Wynecoop

For millennia local tribal people utilized ice caves for food storage. More recently settlers cached their perishables in them, until river energy was harnessed for electricity production, enabling the use of "indoor kitchen ice caves," now called refrigerators.

Numerous, natural basalt caves dot this landscape on the north side of Five Mile Prairie and beyond. Most are now on private property, which needs to be respected, and many are in jeopardy, or have already been destroyed, usually because of ignorance of their cultural significance. Jack led us to an ice cave and it was memorable to see it up close and to feel the cold air emanating from the cavity. (A participant felt the hair on the back of his neck stand up when he saw some of us thrust our hands



inside the cave – he grew up in rattlesnake country, and these concave formations would have housed snakes if the air emanating from within were not so consistently cold). The cave captivated us all. We came away feeling privileged to see one, and desirous that the remaining ones be appreciated and held safe from further encroachment or destruction.

After viewing the cave we drove to one of the Riverside State Park trailheads that leads up high on the slope-side of the prairie. From there we caught brief, glorious views of the Little Spokane River meandering through its valley below. At one point, as we approached a vista single file, nearly every one of the 20+ participants commented that "it would be nice to camp here," or, "I could live here," or, "this is where I want my house." It was a really beautiful spot

alongside the trail – the trail that leads to so many wild flowers, shrubs, galls, birds, water features, animal scat, and geologic formations – each element enticing us to keep on treading higher, and learning more.

Vireos, hummingbirds, warblers, nuthatches, a red-tailed hawk, and wild turkeys provided the background soundtrack for the group. We came to a place where thatch ants utilized a fir tree's surface root to build an unusual colony(s) running horizontally with the ground instead of utilizing the specie's more common vertical mound-building practice. Of particular interest were the carpets of rich

green pinegrass – a grass species not very palatable to grazing animals, but valued by the Interior native people who used it to line cache pits and pit-cooking ovens. They also wove socks, and created natural insoles from the grass's tough fibers to line their moccasins.

The diminutive Hooker's fairybell plant (pictured), a member of the lily family, was found, as was the Western meadowrue, whose multiple purplish stamens hung below white sepals - eliciting comments from several observers that the blooms looked like tiny (fairy) chandeliers or wind chimes. A wildflower field guide states that this rue was utilized by tribal people who crushed the seeds in their mouth until the seeds were pulverized, "then rubbed them on the hair and body as perfume." This hiking day in May was truly a sweet-scented, melodious fairyland!

The two geologists on the hike each spoke about the basalt/granite formations of this landscape, explaining how the Ice Age floods worked the land. It was good to have the fellows along. Later I asked one of them what he liked about this hike and he said, "In particular, I liked the Ice Cave site. Not only the geology, but the archeological and historical significance. In general, I enjoyed the leisurely pace and being outdoors. I am not much of a wildflower person, however I do appreciate the whole of "natural history" particularly in the context of geology, history,

and archeology. To sum it up, the field trip was an excellent opportunity for me to do my favorite things: geo-wandering, geo-wondering and geo- gazing."

Although I can't speak for our leader, I sensed that he too was acquiring useful information from the geologists' interpretations – perhaps for a new book. Jack's role as teacher/student is never ending and is what endears him to those who like to go on these hikes with him – again and again.

The participants from Chewelah were a welcome addition to the tour, as were several other first-timers.

More photos and a tiny video are posted on our website: www.flsrv.org.

We thank FLSRV board member, Harla Jean Biever, for organizing, advertising, and coordinating this annual event. And with our thanks, the participants proffer her a symbolic wildflower bouquet of 'chandeliers' and 'fairybells'.

**Board Member
Michael Kennedy**

Michael Kennedy, his wife, and three children moved to Spokane and the Little Spokane Valley in 1994 from Santa Rosa, CA. Michael was elected to the Board of Directors in 2006 and has been on the Board ever since. Michael is a land planner and construction manager and brings this background to the board meetings.

"Being on the Board allows me to give something back to the community and to the Little Spokane Valley. This area that we call home needs extra special attention with the many diverse issues it encompasses--wildlife, shoreline habitat, river water issues, and the valley's trails and roadways."

"The members of the Board of Directors take their positions very seriously and make decisions based upon their best judgment as to what is best for our area. Thank you for allowing me to one of the voices on the Board."



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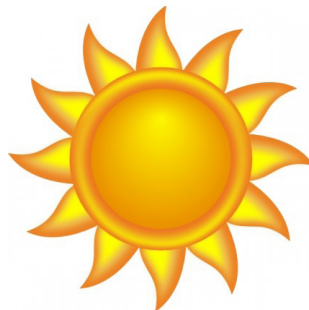
Valley Cleanup 2014

Michael Kennedy

Friends of the Little Spokane River Valley held their annual cleanup day for the valley on Saturday, April 26, 2014. Last year in 2013, we had a below normal turnout; but this year we got back to our normal amount of volunteer's--around 30 people. We had enough to cover all the routes. Thanks to everyone! Our goal each year is to clean up most of the major roads in the valley from Wandermere to Perry; Shady Slope to the top of the hill; Dartford to Hazard Road; Hatch Road to the pool; and Golden Road, Midway, and Colbert Road including some new area along US 395.

We collected a lot of paper trash, miscellaneous wood; someone dumped a construction load over Shady Slope with windows, carpet, wood, etc. Estimated total trash was 40 to 50 bags, some tires, metals more than the previous year's total. Good job!!

After the cleanup, a chili feed was held at Bart and Lindell Hagen's house for those who helped out. Thanks to those who prepared food: Tina Wynecoop and Lindell Haggin



for the chili, Martha Schafer and Roberta Ellis for the cornbread, and Harla Jean Biever for the cookies.

Please mark your calendars for next year's cleanup scheduled in April. We need your time and your continued support and help to keep our valley clean!



FLSRV Website

Have you visited our web site? We are continually updating information in which you might be interested. Take a look at flsrv.org.