

FLSRV Newsletter



Summer
2021



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2021 Membership

We have 90 families on our membership list. If you have not made your membership please go to our Website, simply by putting: FLSRV into your search engine. Then you can print out a membership form and mail it to us.

Thanks so much to all of you who have signed up for 2021.

Advertisers Wanted!

As a non-profit organization we are always looking for ways to offset our printing and postage costs. The Friends of the Little Spokane River Valley are soliciting advertisers to sponsor our newsletter. We are now including local advertisers (see below) in our newsletter. Please support our sponsors.

Trails Committee Update

Mark Case

The current trail design for the west side of Little Spokane Drive from Midway Road to Colbert Road is progressing. Last spring we got comments from Spokane County looking for a few more details to the design including ADA ramp requirements and making sure we don't interfere with the existing drainage ditches.

Meanwhile we got a bid to complete the entire trail section including retaining walls and a boardwalk at the cattail area. Bid came in approximately \$560k, as you well imagine our coffers are no where near that, so we continue to look for ways to raise money.

Recently we met with an adjacent land owner that found a way along the edge of their property that would work without building a retaining wall, just removal of a couple trees, which will save us money. Another land owner gave us an easement

that enabled us to save a group of trees that we won't have to pay to remove.

The plan is to break the project up into phases as we continue to raise money. The length of completion will depend on donations and possible grants that we continue to search for. Hope you are getting out there and enjoying the trails we have completed so far!



Friends of Little Spokane River Valley, Inc.

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I was born and raised in Spokane and graduated from Mead High School. Throughout the years, I've gained a collective understanding of the area. I have experience working in construction and sales. In the construction industry, I have been tasked with handling disputes for big companies. I understand the negotiating process. Whether you're looking for a home, an investment, or a commercial property, it's a big life decision and I treat everyone the same. With honesty, integrity, and great communication I plan to make your purchase or selling experience a respectful and positive one. I look forward to working with you and helping provide a great life experience.



706 W Garland Ave Spokane, Wa 99205

Roadside Heroes & Heroines

Information on the Valley Clean-up
sponsored by FLSRV in April 2021

Michael Kennedy

Friends of the Little Spokane River Valley held their annual clean-up day for the valley on Saturday, April 17, 2021. This year again we had one outside group to volunteer for the cleanup, Boy Scout Troop 218, with Scout Master, Richard Parish. Thanks again!

It turned out to be another big clean-up day with around 30 to 35 people and a lot of kids with their parents. We had enough volunteers to cover all the routes. Thanks to everyone who did show up! 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, carpet, bottles, etc. Estimated total trash again was one of the largest hauls we have had in years. We again had to move to Moose Park in Gleneden due to Shady Slope construction. We will most likely use Moose Park again next year. We will notify everybody in the Spring of our location.

After the clean-up, we did not have our annual chili feed that is held at Bart and Lindell Haggin's home due to Covid-19.

Please mark your calendars for next year's clean-up scheduled in April, 2022. We will set the exact date this winter. We need your time and your continued support to help to keep our valley roadways clean. This is also a good way to get to know your neighbors!



Contributions by People Who Regularly Take a Walk, and Pick Up Litter Along the Way

- Kathy Duft -

We have lived in north Spokane/Colbert since 2007. We have been doing the community beautician for about the last 5 years. It is amazing how much litter seems to accumulate from year to year. I am thankful to be able to still do a small part to help our environment and community to be a better place to live and enjoy. So far we haven't found anything outstanding, but hoping to find that one special lottery ticket. As for improving the program maybe someone could give a talk at the midway elementary school about litter and see if the kids can get involved along with their parents.

- Russ and Lana English -

My wife and I have lived in Colbert now for 12 years. As soon as we heard about the FLSRV cleanup from Tina we immediately volunteered. We wanted to do it at first because we saw all the trash on Hatch Rd and wondered why it was never picked up. So, instead of complaining we dove right in and started helping. We volunteered to clean Hatch Rd. from Kilgore Lane to Dartford Rd. The first few years we did it ourselves just the two of us. Eventually we recruited some neighbors to help us. Over the years the people changed but eventually Bob and Kathy Duft joined us and we have been doing the cleanups together with them.

Over the years we have found some strange items. The first year we did the cleanup we picked up more than 53 empty small airline size alcohol bottles. This year I am happy to say

we only found 8. Another item we picked up often is round chewing tobacco containers. There have been hundreds over the years but this year we only found 11. The new thing we found this year was 34 disposable vaping pens. We never found those before this year. And to roundup our strangest find this year, we found a baggie of marijuana. Which I disposed of by grinding it into the roadway with the heel of my shoe.

I am glad to say that the amount of trash we have collected each year has gone down each and every year. My wife and I do this also because it is a visible way to give back to this great community we have here in Colbert. We will continue to do it for as long as we are able to do it. A big thanks to Tina Wynecoop for getting us involved.

- Alanna and Jim Crouch -

We feel it is important to bloom where you are planted in your community. So cleaning up litter along the road is a great way to get outside and give back to the Little Spokane River Valley community and its board members.



Many Hands

Judy Palpant

California quail often coexist with aluminum cans and other debris in our valley's ditches. At the recent annual April valley clean up, it was heartening to see children and their parents, teens and old-timers turned up to lend a hand. But during the other months of the year, if we go on a long walk, my husband Sam and I keep plastic bags in our pockets for the inevitable cups, bottles, and wrappers tossed from passing cars.

After one of these walks last summer, I approached the entrance to Pine River Park with a full bag of rubbish and another one of recycling. A woman wearing garden gloves was pulling weeds from between the red rocks and putting them in a garbage bag.

"Thank you for your work!" I called to her.

She looked up and said, "And thank you for yours!"

We laughed and found out we both live in Pine River Park. It turned out that Jan Cooper and I share mutual friends and our daughters attended Mead High School together. The eyesore caused by the weeds was notable and I asked her if she could use some help.

The following Thursday, Jan returned with her husband Mike and we tackled the rock enclosed flower bed built into the stone wall. I told them that twenty some years ago Jon Keller, a neighbor boy, designed and built the rock entryway as an Eagle Scout project. His mom planted daffodil bulbs in the rock flower bed. Over time, the bulbs had been eaten or rotted, leaving only a display of weeds. A couple of other Pine River residents previously tackled the area but had moved away or been discouraged by the lack of water. We decided to build up the soil and try

planting again.

A master gardener friend came up with a design that included deer and drought resistant plants which would also attract bees and butterflies. She and her husband returned in the fall with the "starts" taken from her own plants. In addition, 50 daffodil bulbs were purchased. Four Pine River Park families agreed to come on a Saturday in early November to plant them. Children from Pine River Park dug holes and put in the bulbs: Skyler, Ella, Conrad, Hannah, Anders, Martin, Hope, Sophia, Gracie, Makayla, Owen, Zoe, Conner, Clara, Wyatt and Austin. They were encouraged to keep an eye open for the flowers during the coming spring. This week, Zoe just told me she saw green things popping up where we'd planted bulbs.

We encouraged the kids to fill their water bottles and empty them on the flowers this summer. Hopefully, others will do the same.

This past Halloween, we spotted

a couple broken logs on the fence that surrounds the red rock area. My husband Sam joined Mike Cooper and neighbor/engineer Craig Gendreau and his son Jake. Together, they sized up the problem and returned with the tools and equipment to repair the logs. As you drive or walk past the entrance to our neighborhood, take a look. Remember the vision and work of an Eagle Scout recently renewed with the small hands of the next generation. Enjoy the daffodils followed by the irises, then the lavender, goldenrod and other flowers that will bloom in the months ahead.

It is a joy to live along the Little Spokane River. Let's take pride in our river valley, its roadsides and trails so that we can pass to the next generations both the blessings of living here as well as the duties required to maintain our beautiful environment. Thanks for doing your part.



Fishtrap Falls/Hog Lake Hike With Jack Nisbet

Tina Wynecoop

You know you are on to something special when your organization (flsrv.org) sponsored an outdoor event this spring and 15 of the 20 attendees were our 'neighbors' from Spokane's south hill Rockwood Retirement Communities!

Following a year's hiatus, our decade-long annual hikes to someplace wonderful in our region and guided by Jack Nisbet, led us to explore Fishtrap Falls which connects Fishtrap Lake with Hog Lake.

The morning hike through pineywoods and open shrub-steppe landscape took place in the Cheney-Palouse scablands. The view of the gorgeous stairstep waterfall that feeds Hog Lake was just one of the highlights: wildflowers, birds, bird song, geological features, wetlands, and cultural sites added so much to the morning as we immersed ourselves in the ancestral homeland of the Spokane Indians.



How many of us have zoomed past this landscape as we drive I-90? How many have imagined that this landscape didn't exactly excite our interest? Well, what we miss by not hiking the grassland that quietly shelters its secret beauty. It was here that our guide led us as we walked among native plants and wildlife that sustained these first people. We were in a 15,000 year-old "grocery store" as it were...it was here we could explore what might be called their "Rosauers,

Fred Meyer, Huckleberries and Safeway" all wrapped up in a bountiful, sustaining landscape. Jack shared his knowledge of the traditional ways, ways that are being revived among today's tribal people. "We are still here," they say, and the landscape affirms their presence.



A special moment happened as we observed an "immigration" of Turkey vultures soaring over the falls – so serene in their spring travels northward. I was wishing we could stop right there and share a favorite poem by Robinson Jeffers titled,

Vulture

(1963)

*I had walked since dawn and lay down to rest on a bare hillside
Above the ocean, I saw through half-shut eyelids a vulture wheeling high up in heaven,
And presently it passed again, but lower and nearer, its orbit narrowing, I understood then
That I was under inspection. I lay death-still and heard the flight-feathers
Whistle above me and make their circle and come nearer.
I could see the naked red head between the great wings
Bear downward staring. I said, "My dear bird, we are wasting time here.
These old bones will still work; they are not for you."
But how beautiful he looked, gliding down
On those great sails; how beautiful he looked, veering away in the sea-light over the precipice. I tell you solemnly
That I was sorry to have disappointed him.
To be eaten by that beak and become part of him, to share those wings and those eyes--
What a sublime end of one's body, what an enskyment; What a life after death.*

Three hours of wonderful viewing ended back at our parking spot. We all thanked Jack for opening our eyes, enriching our worldview, and for his generous sharing, so knowledgably, about our region.



We also thank our board member, Harla Jean, for organizing these amazing hikes each year.

Hope to see you in 2022!



STAIR STEP FISHTRAP FALLS DISAPPEARING UNDER BASALT ROCK ONLY TO REAPPEAR AT HOG LAKE DOWNSTREAM.

Waikiki Springs Gets a National Trails Day Facelift

Angela Roth

Conservancy Volunteer Writer

(Reprinted by permission of Inland NW Land Conservancy)

Armed with handheld, earth-moving tools, a group of community-minded volunteers met up at the Waikiki Springs Nature Preserve trailhead for the inaugural trail work day on Sunday, June 6.

This day was a long time coming. In the fall of 2020, Inland Northwest Land Conservancy purchased this 95-acre preserve. Seven months later, volunteers came together to start turning it into a great place to enjoy the outdoors.

Introductions and a safety talk started the day. Then, everyone settled in to work on the land. The volunteers broke into groups of two or three and chose different places to start. Based on skill sets and comfort levels, they set about the daunting task of turning rocky, rooted soil into an established trail.

Before the work party, Todd Dunfield, Community Conservation Manager for the Conservancy, had already staked out the proposed trail width and general location. Volunteers let the ground “speak to them” as they set about the tasks of clearing vegetation, digging out weeds and native plants, moving boulders, and excavating the land by hand. They aimed to establish a trail that is not too steep and prevents erosion. When complete, the trail both preserves the natural environment and allows hikers to enjoy their surroundings.

Although these volunteers came from different backgrounds and walks of life, and they all shared a common goal: to give back to and support the land they cherish.

Everyone has a different reason for giving back, but all share a commitment to leave this world better than they found it. On Sunday, they worked to make the Waikiki Springs Nature Preserve a place that everyone can safely enjoy.

These hard-working folks gave hours of their time & energy, so thank them when you see them. Better yet, join our next work party!

inlandnwland.org/events



Water Cooler: The importance of picking up dog poop

Rachel Baker

Spokesman Review, May 6, 2021

Reprinted With Permission

It’s a gorgeous day and you’re out on a hike with your dog. Chances are, your dog will eventually pop a squat along the way to go poop. Your dog went off the trail, so there’s no point in picking it up, right? Isn’t that just nature? After all, nobody is picking up bear or deer feces.

Although your dog is an animal just like a bear or a deer, there is one key difference between them. Your dog likely eats something that comes out of a can or a bag, whereas wildlife eat things in their own environment. This difference might be slight, but it raises an important point as to why dog owners should clean up their dog’s excrement that goes beyond common courtesy.



Commercially prepared dog food is packed full of complete nutrients, and although that is beneficial for your dog’s diet, that dense concentration of nutrients is an environmental pollutant. The excess nitrogen and phosphorus in pet waste throws off the balance of an ecosystem. As those nutrients decompose into the ground, they leach into the soil and local water systems giving algae and weeds a lot to feed off. Excessive algae can cause nearby bodies of water to turn green, murky and potentially hazardous for recreation and local wildlife.

Dog stool can also contain harmful a variety of intestinal parasites such as roundworms and hookworms, as well as contagious viruses like parvovirus

and bacteria such as salmonella and E.coli. This can create health risks for other humans and local wildlife as it creates an unsanitary environment, especially in urban areas. There are also recent concerns about the presence of antibiotic-resistant bacteria found in dog waste.

For these reasons and the fact that dog feces tends to be highly acidic, it cannot be used as fertilizer unless it is composted first. This is easy to see, as dog poop tends to cause yellow patches in lawns. This again comes back to their diet. Manure from plant-eating animals such as cows is entirely different from pet waste as it tends to be full of undigested plant fiber, which can be applied directly to soil.

It’s hard to think that one pile of your dog’s waste would have much of an effect, but getting a better idea of the cumulative effect starts to paint a clearer picture of the total impact. A 2018 study conducted in Boulder, Colorado, found that about 73% of dog owners disposed of their dog waste. With an estimated 5.3 million individual visits to the Open Space and Mountain Parks (OSMP) lands in Boulder, and with 90% of the 150 miles of trails open to dogs, this means an estimated 30 tons of dog waste is left behind in this region alone each year. Of course, the rate at which dog owners pick up and dispose of their pet’s waste may fluctuate in various parts of the country, but this in-depth look at the impact of dog waste illustrates how quickly those small piles add up.

Whether you and your dog are out on a hike in a remote area or going for a stroll down the neighborhood sidewalk, it is always important to pick up your dog’s waste. Don’t be fooled into thinking dog feces is “natural” just because it came from a pet. Do your part to carry plastic bags or other products that can clean up after your pet and leave the beautiful and balanced ecosystem you came out to enjoy as it was before you got there.



Legacy of Kaiser Aluminum Continues to Impact Watershed

Sarah Ben Olson

Greenstone Corporation's plan for development of 300 acres near Costco has been met with excitement. The Kendall Yards developer, building on the site of the Mead Works Kaiser Aluminum property? Wahoo! However, many are confused: the Spokesman-Review has reported on EPA cleanups, leaking settling ponds, and asbestos contamination. Some say the property is actually a Superfund site. Will the development include the former Kaiser Smelter Facility? Are PCBs really being released into Deadman Creek? These are questions I set out to answer.

The Kaiser Aluminum Smelter was built in 1942 to aid the war effort. It closed in 2000. For many of those years, it operated without regulation or oversight of its waste disposal practices. For nearly four decades, 37-acres of the property have been regulated by the EPA as a Superfund site. Yet, Kaiser's environmental impact continues to spread: in the groundwater, and downstream 1.5 miles north to Deadman Creek.

What was once a sprawling property owned by Kaiser, has since been divided into at least four parcels. Only one continues to be owned by the aluminum company. Another, in the center of the former property, has been an EPA Superfund site since 1983. In 2017, a section to the north was sold to Costco. Two other parcels were the subject of an EPA Removal project from summer 2020, through last December. One of these, owned by Kaiser Aluminum Investments, is the site of Greenstone's proposed development.

The former Kaiser Smelter Facility uses a storm drain system, which empties through pipes into settling ponds on the adjacent, Kaiser-owned parcel. These settling ponds then drain into Deadman Creek. Ecology samples from 2019 showed high levels of PCBs throughout the stormwater collection system, including the settling ponds. Testing also showed metals, fluoride, and sulfate were moving offsite in stormwater.

In a joint letter to the EPA in 2019, the Department of Ecology and Spokane Regional Clean Air Agency requested assistance: "We believe an emergency removal action is necessary to mitigate an immediate threat to public health, welfare, and the environment posed by the presence of uncontrolled hazardous materials and contaminants left on the property"(Ecology, 2019).

Brooks Stanfield, EPA's Onsite Coordinator for the removal project readily admits the Kaiser Smelter Facility & drainage ponds were a mess. Carcinogenic material embedded in siding, insulation, and equipment was heaped in piles all over the site. EPA documents described potliner and "building materials . . . high in both asbestos and PCBs." The Kaiser site, where the ponds are located, was bad, too: "There were enough PCBs in those ponds to contaminate a lake the size of Lake Coeur d'Alene times 30," Stanfield later told the

Spokesman-Review.

In their letter to the EPA, Spokane's agencies noted that the properties & their contaminants posed "a risk to plant and wildlife communities. Contaminated stormwater runoff from the site flows through Deadman Creek, into the Little Spokane River and ultimately into the Spokane River, a waterway already heavily challenged by PCBs and heavy metal contaminants" (Ecology, 2019).

EPA's job in a Removal project is to dispose of materials actively leaching toxic chemicals. Stanfield told the Spokesman-Review that the former smelter cleanup is one of the largest undertaken by the EPA in the region. The project removed accumulated refuse in storm drain basins, and directed cleanup of contaminated sediment in the settling ponds.

In the course of the removal, holes were discovered in one of the settling ponds. With EPA's oversight, Kaiser repaired the settling ponds. They did not test beneath the ponds, to discover whether leaking did occur. Today, the ponds continue in active use.

Stanfield underscored that soil and groundwater testing are not key pieces of an EPA Removal project, "We did not use testing as a metric to assess the completion of the EPA's Removal. Our goal was removal." The piles of old siding and the contaminated sediment are gone, but the Department of Ecology is left to enforce followup testing of soils and stormwater runoff. This testing is up to the property owners: Kaiser Aluminum Investments, and Spokane Recycling LLC.

Spokane Recycling LLC has been in almost continual violation of monitoring and cleanup requirements since 2016. As recently as December 2020, elevated levels of contaminants were still being detected in effluent in Deadman Creek - yet orders for more testing and mitigation were ignored. A Notice of Noncompliance was sent March 16th, 2021 which threatened fines of \$10,000 per day if they did not comply. As of this writing, they seem to have come into compliance - for the time being.

The Kaiser Superfund Site

The 38-year-old Kaiser Superfund site is situated just north of the Kaiser smelter facility, nestled between the facility and the future Greenstone development. The site includes potlining solid waste, a 25-acre wet scrubber sludge bed, and a plume of groundwater contaminated with cyanide and fluoride (Ecology 2002). EPA began managing this property after it was discovered, in the late 1970's, that spent potliner was contaminating nearby wells with cyanide and fluoride. Ecology's website describes the groundwater plume stemming from the Superfund site: "[it] is 145 feet below ground, 800 - 1500 feet wide, and travels approximately 2.5 miles to the Little Spokane River. It then discharges into a series of springs."

According to Stanfield, who has no involvement in the Superfund cleanup, that project has just moved into a new phase to address the groundwater plume. Using wells on location, Ecology (with EPA oversight) has implemented a "pump and treat" system for

contaminated groundwater. The system extracts groundwater, then uses biological and physical treatment to remove cyanide and fluoride, before returning treated water to the aquifer. This system was scheduled to begin running in March of 2021.

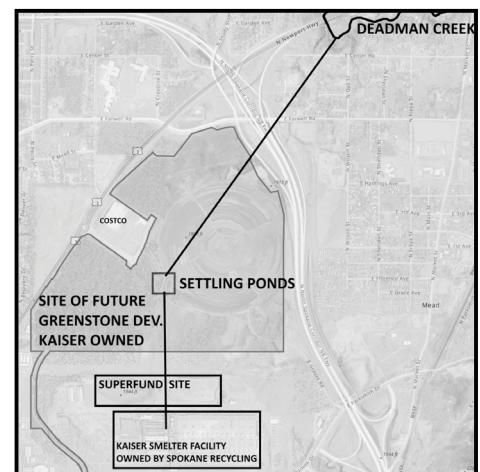
New projects are hoped for on the Kaiser/Greenstone property as well. According to Rob Buchert at Ecology, "Kaiser and Spokane Recycling and Ecology are all working to get the storm water line abandoned," ending piped discharge to Deadman Creek. However, it is not yet clear what alternative will be introduced for the capture and treatment of stormwater flows from the former Smelter Facility.

Questions remain. Whether there is scientific and legal justification for treating these heavily contaminated parcels as distinct from the Superfund site is a question waiting to be answered. Officials at the Department of Ecology were not available for further comment before press time, so as of now, we have not seen a map of the PCB plumes in our watershed. We do not yet have confirmation that the parcel Greenstone is eyeing for mixed-use development has been comprehensively tested for contaminants in its soils.

Right now, Greenstone Corporation is pursuing a Comprehensive Plan Amendment and Zoning Designation to permit children to live on the parcel they hope to buy from Kaiser. This is the parcel that is home to the two settling ponds. Currently, the Agreement only allows senior housing.

The County Planning Department instructs those wishing to make a public comment on the change in designation to send in a Public Records Request - they were unable to say whether there is a public comment period on the designation, or whether a deadline for public comment has passed. The parcel number is: 36096.9063

Nichol Savko, a former environmental engineer who has consulted on cleanup projects in the Spokane area (she has no connection to any activity at the Kaiser property), points out that organizations like FLSRV are free to monitor downstream effects. Volunteers can ensure that cleanup and development projects are not having negative impacts on our watershed. Samples taken from Deadman Creek or in the Little Spokane River, following EPA protocols, can be tested for asbestos, PCBs, and other contaminants.



Shady Slope

Tina Wynecoop

Rousing alarm emails were posted to our community's social website Nextdoor because the road called "Shady Slope" lost its two vertical namesake wooden signs. The iconic signs went missing sometime last fall. They had been attached to both sides of the old, and very large Douglas-fir tree which still grows by the "big curve." A lot of travelers noticed their disappearance and lamented. I did too.

Nextdoor member Stan Myrzgood recalled that "the tree and its sign had been there since Canadian explorer and mapmaker David Thompson came into the region in 1811." Our resident humorist was just pointing out that these twin signs had been there "forever." Does anyone else know the true history of these signs?

In a 1951 newspaper article honoring Mr. and Mrs. L. L. Hildenbrandt's golden wedding anniversary, the couple described having lived on their farm or ranch as they called it, Tawacantha, since 1907. It was located at the base of Colbert Road/Little Spokane River. The river flowed through it. The couple's first trip to the area was made in a buggy pulled by their famous champion road horse, Almota. They recalled, "North Division did not exist then as we know it today (1951). There was a wagon trail that meandered over the hill and northeast toward Peone/Deadman Creek. It used to take us an hour and 45 minutes to go from town to ranch by way of the Shady Slope Road along the southwest side of Peone/Deadman Creek. At the mouth of the creek was a favorite camping spot [in fact, it was a permanent village of the Spokane/Snawwamene band of Indians.] There was no road along the Little Spokane River in those days." (Spokane Chronicle, June 20, 1951, p 5).

Always curious about this road, I had interviewed a local resident for an earlier history piece I wrote for our Friends of the Little Spokane River Valley (FLSRV.com) newsletter. Here's an excerpt: "Six [now seven] decades ago, longtime local resident Wilna B. Jones (nee McLaren) moved from Hillyard to the valley to start her married life at her new address at the base of Shady Slope Road. "In those days," she remembers, "the road wasn't called Shady Slope, in fact it wasn't even a road – just a cow path."

More than a cow path it was the main trail to and from the Spokane Indian's encampment called *tcilciyumuḷ'ix*, "where a creek skirts the foot of a cliff" in their Interior Salish dialect.

Mrs. Jones remembers when the road was just two ruts in the meadow without a formal name until the county began road improvements

in 1937 and called it Perry Road; it was renamed Shady Slope sometime in the 1950's.³

When I began my digital research on the history of the signage, I found many citations which were mostly about real estate listings and car accidents on Shady Slope. As for the car accidents, most of us have learned that winter travel on it is hazardous. It was made more difficult by the natural spring that eased itself across the road near another sign, named invitingly, "Rider's Rest" – which probably was a place to cool an overheated vehicle's radiator caused by the steep climb up the slope toward the top of the hill. Perhaps Rider's Rest was a place for travelers on horseback to give their horses a well-earned drink.



Both the fir tree signs, and the welcoming rest spot sign were still intact when I moved to the area in 1976. And they remained that way for many years afterward.

One of my colleagues, Judy, working at the downtown branch of Spokane Public Library grew up in a lovely home on the west side of Shady Slope Road. I interviewed her recently for this article: She said, "How much I loved living there. How good it always smelled." She had just completed eighth grade when her family moved to Shady Slope Road where she lived in that home with her siblings and parents until she was 23. She recalled, "The road was not super busy then and the signs were on the fir tree. One winter the road was so icy that at least a dozen cars couldn't reach the top of the hill. We formed a warning team to keep more cars from coming up the slope which at the time was impassable."

More than once drivers who would slide downhill off the road in winter came to her door to ask to use the phone to call for help. This was before cell phones. She recalled that once a car had slid off the road and into the trees down the steep slide slope and the occupant was lying beneath the car.

Noting the dangerous winter driving conditions just described I will share a personal experience at

this point before closing the story of the missing sign:

In the late 1990's I was a substitute teacher in our local schools. One February day I was called to work at Northwood Middle School. I arrived early in the day, and it was very cold. When finished with the assignment I got into my car to leave for home when I heard, very clearly, "Take Shady Slope home."

"Ha!, No Way!" I replied to the voice inside me, "I'm not taking that route in winter, ever. Once was enough!" I backed my car out of the parking lot and started to head west to Highway 395 which was much more traveled and sensible. 395 would be plowed and probably free of slippery ice. Then, I heard again, "Take Shady Slope." This time I obeyed although it didn't make sense. I did not slide off the road like I feared.

I live on North Hatch Road and had arrived safely home - without incident. As I was putting my key in the back door's lock, I heard police sirens. I wondered if I had avoided an accident. I had. The next morning, on the front page of the newspaper was a photograph of a tragic automobile accident on the Wandermere Bridge. Had I not listened to the message, "Take Shady Slope," it might have been me. The bridge surface had been coated in invisible black ice. For several years afterward I wondered why I had been protected while the other driver and her child had not survived. I was no more special or deserving. It occurred to me that maybe that driver had not listened to a similar interior, incongruous message of safety. Maybe. I'll never know. I never take Shady Slope Road (in winter).

I remember asking Mrs. Wilna Jones what it was like bumping down Shady Slope in her old Chevrolet truck in winter on a road which would someday become a very busy, winding, and winter-hazardous connector between Highway 2 (formerly called the Pend Oreille Highway) and Little Spokane Drive. "Did her truck ever slide down icy Shady Slope in winter?" She replied, "My husband's truck did, but not mine. He rode it out."

As for those Shady Slope signs, alarm bells started going off when Heather posted: "Does anybody know where the signs went that were mounted to the tree on the big curve? I saw somebody removing them some time ago and was just wondering if they're being restored. We've seen them there all our lives, and are wondering if they'll be back?" What followed that post were thirty-one comments regarding her question: A response from David, "I delivered UPS out here in the 70's and they were here then."

Karen responded that she "was wondering

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FLSRV Summer Picnic

the same thing! I saw a couple of guys removing them and wanted to stop and ask. I miss seeing them." Lisa replied, "I miss the sign, too. Funny how something so simple can have such an emotional impact!" Then, another neighbor, Garith, posted, "These signs are now back and refurbished to remind travelers what road they are on. For the moment, who is responsible for the generous good deed, remains a mystery."

A helpful clue was posted by Rachel: "Hello everyone, I'm a neighbor to the owners of the tree where the sign was posted. We got permission from the owners to take the signs down for restoration. My husband's former student volunteered to restore it and she did a great job. Taking it down was difficult, putting it back will require a lift: the sign is huge. Does anyone have a connection with that type of equipment?"

Well, now we can all view the sign with a sense of relief and gratitude - and give a tip of the ol' hard hat to the Avista crew for ably reinstalling this local, historical treasure!

Since we were unable to hold our annual dinner and fundraising auction in February due to COVID-19, we are planning to have a summer picnic and auction! The event will be held on Friday, August 20th at Midway Elementary School from 5:00-7:00 PM. Rod's Big Texas BBQ will be available for food purchase. Free Ben and Jerry's ice cream will be given to the first 100 attendees, courtesy of Philip Neumann of Synergy Properties. A silent auction will be held to raise funds for continued expansion of the trails. Fun games will be organized for kids. We hope that you will be able to join us!

IF YOU PLAN TO ATTEND PLEASE COMPLETE THIS FORM AND MAIL IT TO:

FLSRV, P. O. Box 18191, Spokane WA 99228
 RSVP Picnic/Auction

RSVP Picnic/Auction

Name(s): _____

Email address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Number of attendees: _____