

# FLSRV Newsletter

Inside  
This Issue

Annual Meeting & Dinner Auction.....Page 1  
Ballow .....Page 1  
Old Becomes New .....Page 1

Skagit Valley Tour.....Page 2  
Spokane Trails Update.....Page 2  
Historic Tree Removal.....Page 3

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## Annual Meeting & Dinner Auction

David Maccini

### Mark Your Calendars!

You're invited to our most important event of the year!

Join us for an evening of community, delicious food, and fundraising at Wandermere Golf Course.

**Date: Friday, February 27, 2026**

**Time: Doors open at 5:30PM**

**Location: Wandermere Golf Course**

### ANNUAL MEETING & OFFICER ELECTION

We will conduct our annual business meeting, including the election of officers for the upcoming term. The following board members are up for election:

Ty Brown, Mark Case, Kirk Neumann, and Lindell Haggin

### FABULOUS DINNER

Enjoy a wonderful Italian meal provided by Ferarri's, and the chance to reconnect with long-time friends and meet new neighbors.

### EXCITING AUCTION

Bid on a fantastic selection of silent auction items! Your participation helps us raise essential funds for our ongoing trail building efforts.

### GREAT FELLOWSHIP

This is a highlight for our community, providing a perfect opportunity for fellowship and celebrating our shared interests.

### Ticket Information

Tickets: \$40 Per Person, or \$75 Per Couple

### How to Purchase

On our website, [flsrv.org](http://flsrv.org)  
Or, send the enclosed form (with a check).

### RSVP Deadline: Feb. 15, 2026

*Your attendance is vital to our organization's success. We look forward to seeing you there!*

## Ballot Friends Of The Little Spokane River Valley Board Members

**February 27, 2026**

Cast votes for 4 candidates.

- Kirk Neumann
- Ty Brown
- Mark Case
- Lindell Haggin



## The Old Becomes New

Kirk Neumann

The benches along the trail at the corner of Columbus and Little Spokane Drive have been rebuilt. Originally built over 20 years ago, these benches have held up well, but over time have become deteriorated and in need of repair.

Back in 2004, Chris Maccini constructed two benches at this location for his Eagle Scout Project. This rest area project included a paver stone walk area, two benches and an information kiosk. This year the benches were rebuilt by Gavin Mundt from Troop 218 for his Eagle Scout Project. The benches were disassembled down to the support posts and then rebuilt with new lumber matching the old design.

The new benches have a fresh coat of paint. The benches look great and should be a good resting area for walkers along the trail for another 20 years.

Friends of Little Spokane River Valley, Inc.

## FLSRV Newsletter

is a publication of:

**Friends of Little Spokane River Valley, Inc.**

P.O. Box 18191  
Spokane, WA 99228  
Phone: 509-993-4775

For article suggestions or comments  
contact Harla Jean Biever

### Board of Directors

Martha Schaefer, President  
Dave Maccini, Vice President  
Lindell Haggin, Secretary  
Harla Jean Biever, Treasurer

Mark Case, Director  
Robert Hylton, Director  
Kirk Neumann, Director  
Ty Brown, Director  
Lance Pounder, Director  
Jack Bury, Director Emeritus  
Tina Wynecoop, Director Emeritus  
Michael Kennedy, Director Emeritus

## Tour to the Skagit Valley Tulip Festival

April 14, 15, &16, 2026

Skagit Valley comes alive with brilliant color each spring. Acres and acres of daffodils, tulips, irises, and lilies entice visitors to the towns of La Conner and Anacortes. They come to take in the pastoral beauty, and to enjoy the annual festivities. The flower-viewing season begins with dainty yellow daffodils in mid-to late-March; a rainbow of tulips takes the stage in April. Irises and lilies follow, providing color well into the month of May.

The Skagit Valley Tulip Festival celebrates this annual burst of spring color. Mother Nature decides exactly when the festival begins, with special events scheduled throughout April.

## Little Spokane Trails Update

Mark Case

Lance Pounder Excavation came to our rescue once more to build the next piece of trail, heading north from Midway where Lance left off previously. Lance & his crew built a 1,530-foot stretch and were able to build up on the existing bedrock berm. That stretch extends to where the 3 transformers are located.

This was made possible by a \$25,000 donation from the Vandervert Community Improvement Fund. Due to the muddy conditions the remaining cleanup is postponed to Spring when things dry out. We continue to have discussions regarding the future trail section NE of Lantern Lane to the existing

## Tour Procedure

April 14th

Calgary Chapel Church • 511 W. Hastings Rd.

BOARD BUS AT: 7:30am

Departing at 8:00am, travel from Spokane to Leavenworth, a charming replica of a Bavarian town in southern Germany. While there enjoy sightseeing, great food and shopping. Continue over Steven's Pass through the scenic Cascade Mountains and reach the Skagit Valley. Today you will visit La Conner for dinner on your own and shopping. You will stay in the Marina Inn Hotel in Anacortes for two nights and it serves your breakfast on Wednesday and Thursday. On Wednesday you will see the wonderful Tulips in the Skagit Valley and visit Roozen Gaarde, lunch will be hosted at Shawn O'Donnell's at the Farmhouse and then visit Tulip Town. Tonight, dinner will be on your own in Anacortes. On the return to Spokane, Thursday, April 16th, see Snoqualmie Falls, have lunch along the way, travel over Snoqualmie Pass, cross the Columbia River and travel I-90 to the eastern part of Washington State. Arrive back in Spokane around 6:00pm on Thursday.

### TOUR INCLUDES

Bus Transportation • Guide • 2 Hotel Nights • 2 Breakfasts and a Lunch  
La Conner • Roozen Gaarde • Tulip Town • Snoqualmie Falls • Baggage Handling

**SINGLE:** \$679.00 Per Person

**DOUBLE:** 2 Beds Per Room: \$530.00 Per Person

On this 2025 tour, forty-five people went and they had a great time and there were lots of things to see. You should consider taking this trip in the upcoming year (2026).

***Please make your reservation with me as soon as possible.***

Include a deposit of \$50.00 per person. It will be placed into your total deposit.

Total deposit must be made with Tour Manager by February 5, 2026.

**Tour Manager: Harla Jean Biever**

Phone: 509-993-4775 • Email: harlabiever@gmail.com

Address: 2220 E. Colbert Rd., Colbert WA 99005

bridge. Recently we met with the county, and a guardrail contractor to discuss options. The possibility of building trail on the backside of the guardrail and opening the guardrail near the bridge was thwarted due to the amount of fill required for overlapping the guardrails at the opening, the bend in the river, and the existing utilities - all of which make for some challenges.

Because the bridge is in good shape it is not slated to be rebuilt anytime soon, so we have suggested to the county the idea of building a pedestrian bridge adjacent (not touching) the existing bridge on the north side (like the Colbert Rd bridge). The county is evaluating the idea at this time, and if the county agrees to it, we will need to hire a surveyor and an engineer to get the permits. This will be partially funded

using a private donation in the amount of \$50,000 received last summer.

As always, we are limited by budget constraints but are grateful to all of the companies & individuals who have donated, including individuals who have contributed to the Go Fund Me account for Friends of the Little Spokane River Valley Trails' ongoing campaign, as well as to those who give their time and efforts to make these trails a reality.



## Historic Trees Removed

### Mark Case

In 1901, Ferdinand and Louise Wunsch acquired over 80 acres along the Little Spokane River, where they built a two-story residence that still stands today (now Meadowbrook Rd). Early in the last century, the Wunsches planted a row of highland poplar tree (shown at right) along what was then a rural road, now known as Colbert Road. For many years, these trees created an attractive corridor along Colbert hill. Each tree had a base diameter of approximately five feet, rising four to five feet before branching into two to four split trunks of roughly two feet in diameter. The trees reached heights exceeding one hundred feet. Over time, however, many of the trees developed internal decay, resulting in branches and debris falling onto the roadway and nearby power lines. Despite routine maintenance, the power company ultimately determined that removal was necessary for public safety. Residents and frequent commuters along Colbert Road continues to adjust to the altered landscape.



Highland Poplar Trees

in Usk. Nattrass was sent to the county jail, and Mildred was held in juvenile detention.

In 1929, the property was sold to Samuel C. Sturman and his wife, Maria. Sturman was well known on the river because of property he once owned near the Indian Painted Rocks. There, in the late 1800s, he built a bridge that is considered the first bridge over the Little Spokane River, near the Indian Painted Rocks. He also donated land for a school to be built, which was named Little Spokane School and was one of the earliest schools in

Spokane County. Unfortunately, shortly after the purchase of Triple Butte, Maria passed away, and the property was sold again.

Today, the original farmhouse stands on 3.2 acres along with a newer home built closer to the river. The original house is used as an upscale short-term rental property. The cistern from the original Triple Butte Farm is visible from the roadway. The area across the river from the farmhouse is an upscale suburban neighborhood, with the main road designated Triple Butte Circle.



The original farmhouse (left) still stands, and is used as an upscale, short-term rental property.



The cistern (below) from the original Triple Butte Farm is visible from the roadway.



The area across the river from the farmhouse is an upscale suburban neighborhood, with the main road designated Triple Butte Circle.

# Stalking the Wild Cucumber

Tina Wynecoop

This article appears in the  
November, 2025 issue of  
North Columbia Monthly.  
Reprinted here by permission.

We didn't have a bible in our home when I was growing up, although when my grandma died, I inherited hers. All of our books were borrowed from Seattle Public Library. I wish I still had each one of the library cards issued to me over the last seven decades so I could frame them because they were my door-openers to paying attention, being astonished, and telling someone, to paraphrase poet Mary Oliver.

I do remember "who promoted foraging for and eating wild foods." His books, *Stalking the Wild Asparagus* and *Stalking the Healthful Herbs* inspired the title of my article. My parents were devoted to his writing, and I still reference his books and use his recipe for making (wild) rose petal jam. Here is a link to John McPhee's terrific profile of Euell Gibbons in the 1968 *New Yorker* magazine: [newyorker.com/magazine/1968/04/06/a-forager](http://newyorker.com/magazine/1968/04/06/a-forager)

Recently, I went on a Washington State Park-sponsored group hike at Indian Painted Rocks along the Little Spokane River. It was led by the park interpreter, Kara Frashefski, and naturalist/author Jack Nisbet. This natural area used to be one of my favorite places to visit ... until the 170-acre fire in July 2015 radically altered its landscape. Before the fire I often kayaked, birded and explored there.

On the hike I asked Jack if he had ever seen a vine which I called "wild cucumber." He hadn't. I mentioned that several years ago I collected vines and their fruit from upstream along this same river. I still have a dried cucumber pod. This vine and the western white clematis vine, also called virgin's bower, are mistaken for each other. Jack knows the Latin names for native plants and told me the vine I was asking about probably belonged in the *Cucurbitaceae* family. I emailed him a photo of the wild cucumber pod. By learning its family name, I could now begin a deeper search for what I had previously collected. I found its matching description and image in University of Washington's Burke Herbarium Collection. The description noted that only three locations of it have been recorded east of the Cascades. One of the three places was along the Little Spokane River! "Scattered along the riverbank, a climbing vine with prickly, succulent fruit. Origin: Native."

This area upstream along the Little Spokane River is a vast wetland which is saturated during spring runoff. Collecting would have to be done in the fall. Neither Jack nor my husband were

available this fall to accompany me, so I asked my friend Mary to help me search for intact vines. I'm glad I did. Mary expresses such enthusiasm for all things "nature" and is a delight to be with.

We agreed to rendezvous at Wandermere Lake, at the golf course parking lot. (This is a wonderful place to observe a variety of waterfowl.) The morning was frosty and full of sunshine. We walked below the tall Highway 395 bridge, tromping through tall grasses alongside Dartford Drive, looking for tall shrubs wearing the cucumber vine. We didn't find any in the usual sites.

Parallel to the road I noticed surveyor stakes flagged with neon pink ribbon placed in the pristine wetland. Did the stakes foretell the widening of the busy two-lane road? Across the road a woman was walking in our direction. Mary and I crossed over to her side and I momentarily forgot about our cucumber mission because I wanted to ask if the hiker knew what the stakes represented. She did. They marked where Avista Utilities planned to bury its overhead power lines. Phew! I could handle that. Meanwhile, Mary continued searching for the vines and found not just one vine, but two. We used our cellphone cameras to document "our" vine. I was elated and celebrated by wearing a garland of the cucumber vine around my neck on the way back to where we parked.

While the cucumber fruit is described as "succulent" in the Burke Herbarium records, succulent does not mean one should taste it: the fruit is deadly. In my copy of Erna Gunther's *Ethnobotany of Western Washington: The Knowledge and Use of Indigenous Plants by Native Americans*, U of W Press, 1945, she lists the *Cucurbitaceae* "Gourd Family. Old Man Root. Medicine. [The coastal Salish Indigenous people] including the Lower Chinook use the gourd as a poultice. The Squaxin mash the upper stalk in water and dip aching hands into it. It is poisonous, as was proved by the son of a friend who ate some and died. The Chehalis burn the root, powder it; and mix it with bear grease to apply it to scrofula sores."

This new information led me back to the bible – not forager Euell Gibbon's, but that other one a lot of folks swear by (and on). In its scriptural texts there is an account (II Kings 4: 38-41) which had piqued my curiosity for decades, and according to a commentary:

"In a time of famine, the prophet Elisha came to Gilgal, a place in Palestine known as the campsite where the Israelites first settled after crossing the Jordan River. The people gathered to eat a common meal. The cook had gone out foraging for ingredients and unknowingly added the fruit (translated as gourd or cucumber) of a wild vine into the pot. When this was discovered, presumably because of the bitter taste, they cried out a warning, 'there's death in the pot.' Elisha, casting some meal into the pot, made the porridge wholesome." (The Interpreter's Bible, vol. 3). I've often wondered if the vine the cook used was the same cucumber vine as those growing along the Little Spokane River. Mary (her middle name should be "Enthusiasm" because, according to the dictionary, enthusiasm is word derived from Latin: *en (in)(god)*) and I were so inspired by our shared adventure. During the same morning, we made a second important discovery when we found countless numbers of "bridge spiders." I will continue the account of our adventure in my December "Home Ground" column. I can't wait to share with you. Until next month then, you might pull your field guide (bible) to eastern Washington spiders off your bookshelf because E. B. White, author of *Charlotte's Web*, says, "Once you begin watching spiders, you haven't time for much else." Tina says: Growing up in western Washington was the most interesting place in the world until 1970 when I headed 300 miles east to teach on the Spokane Indian Reservation. The culture, geography, history, weather, the people, and the flora and fauna of this inland region of the state have since become my beloved "home ground."



# Friends of the Little Spokane River Valley, Inc.

## 2026 Association Membership Form

### - Goals of the Organization -

- Preserve and sustain the unique character of the Little Spokane River Valley, including its open space and natural setting, maintaining lower density zoning.
- Protect the area's ecosystem including water quality, wetlands, priority habitat and wildlife, and dwindling native vegetation.
- Encourage the development of area parks.
- Educate public officials of FLSRV concerns, being pro-active when major issues are at the forefront.

Property owners in the area 3/4 mile either side of the Little Spokane River from Chattaroy to Dartford, then 1/2 mile either side of the Little Spokane River from Dartford to the Fish Hatchery are invited to become members. Each membership may include two members of one family. Individuals who live outside the designated area, or any organization, may join as an Associate (non-voting) member.

Being in agreement with the goals, I wish to join FLSRV. Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Name (or Organization): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Home telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail/FAX: \_\_\_\_\_

What are your special concerns about the valley? \_\_\_\_\_

What issues or topics would you like discussed at meetings? \_\_\_\_\_

#### Check if you are interested in helping with:

- Trails Committee
- Newsletter (writing &/or publishing)
- Board member
- Administrative help
- Other \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

#### 2026 FLSRV Membership Dues:

<b>Otter - Annual Family Membership</b> (2 membership votes within area)	<b>\$25.00</b>
<b>Deer - (\$60/year)</b> Annual Family "Plus" Support	\$ _____
<b>Heron - (\$10/mo)</b> Annual Family Plus Monthly Donation	\$ _____
<b>Associate Member \$15.00</b>	\$ _____
<b>Trail Fund Contribution</b>	\$ _____
<b>TOTAL PAID</b>	\$ _____

Friends of Little Spokane River Valley, Inc. is an IRS Section 501(c)(3) tax-exempt non-profit corporation (a charity). Dues and donations are tax exempt to the full extent of the law. You should check with your tax consultant to be sure this applies to you.

Make checks payable to: **Friends of Little Spokane River Valley**  
Mail to: **Harla Jean Biever, 2220 E. Colbert Rd., Colbert, WA 99005**

For Dinner Reservation, please complete registration form below, indicating number of people in your party. Detach, and send this form, along with a check made out to FLSRV, to arrive by February 15, 2026. (Alternatively, make reservations at [FLSRV.org](http://FLSRV.org).)

#### FLSRV Dinner Reservation

Friday, February 27, 2026, Doors Open 5:30pm, Introductions 6:15, Dinner 6:30, Speaker 7:15  
Wandermere Golf Course Clubhouse

# Tickets requested \_\_\_\_\_

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

\$40 Each / \$75 per Couple

Amount  
enclosed: \$

Street: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Make checks payable to **FLSRV**. Donations may be tax deductible.

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Send to: **Harla Jean Biever**  
**2220 E. Colbert Rd. Colbert, WA 99005**

Pick up your tickets at the door.



Friends of  
Little Spokane River Valley, Inc.  
P.O. Box 18191  
Spokane, WA 99228



## Thank you to our Donors!

*Dave Maccini*

As many of our supporters know, we received a \$50,000 donation from an anonymous donor in late 2023. This donation allowed us to complete a section of trail with a retaining wall along Little Spokane Dr. near Riverview Lane.

Last year, we received a very generous donation from the Richard A. Vandervert Landscaping and Environmental Fund, at Innovia, which will be used to complete the next section of trail heading north from Midway Road.

This year we received another very large donation, from an anonymous donor, at Innovia, which will allow us to continue the efforts to continue work on the trail near the bridge at Lantern Lane. We are truly grateful for all our donors and the support we have received from the community here in the Little Spokane River Valley!

If you would like to donate to support our ongoing efforts, you can do that through our website: [flsrv.org](http://flsrv.org).



**Scan QR Code  
to  
Donate**



*Thank you so very much!*

