

Skagit Trail Builders Advisory Committee Meeting

Sept 9, 2023 4:59pm-5:19 pm

In attendance:

Jim "JT" Taylor
Jerry Granahan
Jenny Sandbo
Ellie Slabodnik
Robert Slabodnik
Zoe Slabodnik
Bret Turner
Ryan "RJ" Barnes
Sativia Espinoza
John Equihun
Kinsey Shilling
Joseph Giedraitis
Olivia Moss
Joe Flynn

Jenny Sandbo, Advisory Committee Chair

Introduced purpose of advisory committee meeting, moderated, and kept time:

- Formalize the opportunity for feedback from our community of volunteers
- Communicate activities of leadership team
- Document needs/questions/action items to report to our fiscal agent, United General Foundation 304 (UGF304)

Jim Taylor, Executive Director – updates

- Contracts for next 2 years have been agreed upon with SWIFT work group. Waiting to confirm and sign final document. In the meantime, it's OK to keep working on Hill Creek Trail.
- STB session fee was raised, and insurance updated.
- New minor waiver and registration forms.
- Received a tentative approval from SCPR for the bridge proposal (connecting the north ends of Pump House Trail and Hill Creek Trail). Work will be done from Pump House side using Elk Trail as a shortcut from road.

Questions from volunteers:

Q: How soon will work begin on the bridge?

A: Potentially summer 2024. JT will be meeting with partners to work out more details.

Q: Are we going to unearth the old steel bridge and use part of that?

A: No. It doesn't span the creek.

Q: Are there limitations on who can help build the bridge? (this question from one of our high school student volunteers).

A: No limitations! We want to include everyone and teach the next generation.

Jerry Granahan Crew Leader – plan for next work party

- We may move to a new borrow pit at the next work party.
- Proposed that Art (the contractor with the excavator) create a short-cut trail for volunteers while we are working on the far end of Hill Creek Trail. The distance from the trail head/porta potty to the current work site is about 1-mile. This means volunteers must walk over a mile to use the bathroom. Not having easy access to a bathroom creates potential privacy and health concerns. Because of the bathroom location, we are walking out to the trail head for lunch

Q: Can we dig a hole for people to use and bury it when we are done?

A: Some of our volunteers have expressed discomfort with this idea.

Q: For lunch break, can we choose to stay at the work site and “go” in the woods or do we have to walk out to the trail head?

A: You can choose what you want to do. We think it’s a good practice for volunteers to eat lunch together and use the provided toilet facilities.

Jenny Sandbo, Communication - updates

- Last summer we updated the website so users could more easily find information about the project and (most importantly) sign up to volunteer. This summer we updated the website, print materials, and templates for social media, to better reflect the diversity of age and gender of our community volunteers.
- Looking for feedback from volunteers about website, social, any other communication strategies for recruiting new volunteers.
- Thanked volunteers for being part of the project and helping our team grow.

Volunteers at large – questions, ideas, discussion

Q: Can we have a bucket-set up (with seat and absorbing gel) and a pop-up tent to cover emergencies?

A: Yes – we can do that. JT would take responsibility for set-up, take-down, and disposal.

(Note: JT is having knee surgery in October and won’t be able attend work parties for several weeks/months. Someone else will have to take responsibility for the pop-up toilet).

A vote was taken - vote unanimous “yes”. JT will put together estimate.

(Note: Jenny is going to ask for feedback from core group of female and youth volunteers before we move forward with purchase.)

Q: Fourth of July parade was fun. Anyone interested in doing the Sedro Woolley Christmas Parade?

A: (Group discussion) No. Determined it was too big of a commitment because it required a float. And the Slabodnik’s are too busy to organize a winter parade event.

Meeting adjourned 5:19 pm

After the meeting volunteers asked questions about how to control the blackberries that are growing over the new trail and in the big meadow. They wanted to know if that's a job for volunteers or if the Parks Dept will be spraying this fall and next spring.

Jenny proposes that we hold the next advisory committee meeting during the work party lunch break. This would include a larger group of volunteers and be held in an environment where it is easier to hear (restaurant was very noisy).