

Jan 25, 2025

Skagit Trail Builders Advisory Committee Meeting

Notes taken by Jenny Sandbo, Advisory Committee Chair

29 Volunteers in attendance

Our 2025 Build Plan – JT

- Complete the Pump House and Hill Creek Trails, which will include..
 - Completing rock work at the Pump House Bridge and elevated trail
 - Stewardship – restoration, repairs & improvements, controlling plant growth, and decommissioning borrow pits
 - Final capping, where needed, with rock sand
 - Completing work at the new bridge site and the connector trail

Our trail work on Skagit County Parks and Recreation property is expected to be done by September 15th, 2025 - in preparation for a ribbon cutting ceremony. Then we will move to adjacent properties managed by the Port of Skagit and City of Sedro-Woolley to improve trail connections and grow the size of the NSRA trail system.

Q: What are the potential projects?

A: Extending the Brick Creek Trail around Goat Hill to create a perimeter trail that runs along the south side of Hansen Creek, and build a loop trail around Thompson Pond.

Q: Where is the Brick Creek Trail?

A: As you near the historic guard building when entering the hospital grounds, you will see it on your left. It comes out onto the gravel road behind Trevennen Hall, just below Goat Hill. This trail does not yet have a sign.

Bridge Update – Jenny/Bret

We've been getting a lot of questions about the beautiful new bridge that is under construction at the north end of the Pump House Trail.

The bridge is a project of [Skagit County Parks and Recreation](#). The County's contractor has been utilizing a select group of volunteers from our roster to assist with the work. So, while we are not directly involved in managing that build, when the contractor's work is completed we will be building the connector trail, the elevated approaches and doing the restoration and naturalization of the build site.

The revised plan is for the new bridge to be completed by March.

Once the bridge is finished, our volunteer crews will extend the connector trail, build the elevated approaches, and restore the area around the bridge and creek. Our plan is to be done at the bridge site by the end of June 2025. As was mentioned earlier, the County's ribbon cutting ceremony is planned for Sept 2025.

The County has named it **Song Sparrow Bridge**.

Thanks to **Kinsey, Craig, Bret, Emily, Joe, Jerry, and Lynn** for their hard work and dedication to the project.

- There were no questions or comments

Restoration Work - Jenny

We know our volunteers are really tired of digging up blackberry root crowns. We are currently working with our project partners to come up with a stewardship plan. In the meantime, we don't want the trails to become overgrown - so let's stay with it.

We have 2 more work parties before moving to the new bridge.

- There were no questions or comments

Crew Leader Training – Jenny/JT

We want to train more crew leaders. We would like our Youth Leaders to be more involved as crew leaders. Paul Klein has come on as a crew leader, and we want to train anyone else that is interested. So far Elliot and Ed have expressed interest.

Best way to approach? How is it determined when people are ready to take the lead? What skills does everybody think will require the most training? Thoughts?

- **Discussion/Feedback (Alex, Ellie, Sativia, Bret, Lynn, Marcia):** Do not want to have separate training sessions, would instead prefer to partner with leaders for "on the job training". See a need to train people on the logistics of moving materials, people placement, and tool use. General agreement that volunteers would prefer to train in a specialty, like capping or the basics of trail building.

Trail Signage Proposal – Paul Klein

Recognizing a need for better way-finding for park visitors, now seems like the time to leverage the Parks Director's enthusiasm to develop NSRA as a "Marquee" park.

Lack of trail signage originating from locations like the Hub Drive access point, the Veteran's Park, and from the service road - leads to questions from trail users.

As a user of the Northern State Recreation Area since 2019, and now as a trail volunteer for the second year, my wife and I (Paul shared) have experienced many questions from other users when parking at Hub Drive, as well as when walking from Veterans Park towards the barns - asking "where the trails are."

Also, I have heard from multiple people that volunteer for the STB group that this is the first time they found out about the trails and how to access them.

There should be a sign at the Hub Drive entrance showing trails (Pumphouse, Hill Creek, Song Sparrow Bridge, etc.) as well as adding signage to identify the access road leading to trails, so the public knows it is a public access road. Confusion seems to be caused by the lack of clear signage. Of note, the "no access" sign on the Port road, that is near the Dovetail Bridge, causes some to believe that care should be taken.

Suggestions:

1. Add an updated kiosk/map sign at Hub Drive as you go down the hill towards Dovetail Bridge, or as a second option - put a kiosk/map sign in the area before crossing the bridge at its west end. This should include a small (you are here sticker).
2. Put a sign on the service road, at the turn - stating it is an open road access.
3. Move the current kiosk/map sign that is located at the cement pad. Now that the trail routings are defined, and the trail loops have been identified - work to update the map is possible. Moving the kiosk/map sign from the north end of the slab to the grassy area adjacent to the new bench would make it more visible. It was shared that when walking the access road it is difficult to see the kiosk/map sign.

- **Discussion/Feedback (Marcia, Deb, Ellie, Jerry, Sativa, Jenny, Lynn):**
 - o There was general support for a kiosk at Dovetail Bridge and directional signage at junction of service road and Dovetail bridge
 - o Should we ask for a sign or a kiosk near Song Sparrow bridge, how about the connector trail? One person expressed she prefers less signage, to keep trails "a little wild" - others find the lack of signage confusing
 - o Naming and installing signage on the service road is needed
 - o Way-finding at junctions helps kids learning how to read maps
 - o Way-finding at junctions helps those not skilled & comfortable with maps
 - o Need "You are Here" on trail maps

- Park map needs to be updated with Hill Creek Trail and Song Sparrow Bridge – it was shared that people choose to not use the trail because the current map makes it seem like it might be a dead end.
 - Comment from JT: GIS is expected at the next SWIFT meeting
 - Jenny & Paul will write up proposal to present at the next SWIFT workgroup meeting

Planning Meeting, 4:30 pm, Iron Mountain : Headcount 14 (actual attendance 16)