

April 12, 2025

Skagit Trail Builders Advisory Committee Meeting

Notes taken by Jenny Sandbo, Advisory Committee Chair

26 Volunteers in attendance

Hiker Rally Day - Jenny

Washington Trails Association organized a rally in Olympia on March 18 to advocate for trail funding during the spring legislative session. While our organization is not directly affected by state budget cuts, a large number of trails in our area are, including those managed by WA State Parks, Dept of Natural Resources, Dept of Fish and Wildlife. As you all know, when it comes to funding shortfalls, there are ripple effects.

The event was very well organized. WTA provided training and documents. We joined up with two retired Forest Service workers from Arlington to represent District 39. Together we spoke with our three legislators: Carolyn Eslick, Keith Wagoner, and a staff person from Sam Low's office.

The issue: WA State has a budget shortfall of \$15B they are trying to reconcile. It will require deep cuts.

What we asked for: Maintain Funding at \$10 per biennium for each of the three entities

How it's going: There are 2 budget proposals, and both preserve most of the funding for trails. The House's proposal is the better of the two.

You can help by writing to your representatives asking them to support the House proposal. Links to [WTA's Trail Action Network](#) are provided on our website.

Comments: Ellie encouraged others to join the Action Network by telling them she did it and it was easy. Several in the group thanked JT and Jenny for going to the rally and sharing the information.

Grant Funding – JT

We are working with UGD304 on two grants. Beth is helping us write one so we can purchase another power carrier to reduce our dependence on unreliable rentals.

Amy and a student from WWU, Olivia Knott, are helping us write an operational grant for \$20,000. We are looking to fund two part-time positions: Executive Director and

Communications. In order to replace JT and Jenny and keep the organization doing great work in the community, we need to fund these roles.

Q: Are JT and Jenny going to leave?

A: No, we are seeking funding in order to replace ourselves in our administrative roles. We will stay on as advisors and volunteer leaders at the Saturday work parties.

Recent donations – Jenny

Beth did a talk at the SW Rotary Club meeting about UGD304 programs and they sent her back to the office with a check for \$1,000 for STB! Wow! Thanks to Beth and the Rotarians!

In Feb, Hampton Lumber donated \$2,000 to sponsor our trail crew t-shirts. Wow!

Anna was a Community Service Winner with her employer BNB Builders. They donated \$250 to STB to honor her work with us! Wow! Thanks!

We've also had a number of local trail users donate to our project. Their names can be found on our [website](#).

Comments: Group clapped and cheered.

Scope of Work & Port Contract - JT

We have been asked to finish our work on Hill Creek Trail by the end of June. However, due to the 6-month delay on the bridge, that timeline is going to be challenging. The county has expressed openness to holding an additional work party in September (if needed) to take care of final details before the Ribbon Cutting Ceremony on September 19.

SOW includes:

- completing the connector trail to Song Sparrow Bridge
- drainage and final rock sand capping
- rock work at bridge
- restoration of borrow pit, bridge site, and access trails
- decommissioning of social trails to big rock
- wind phone
- installing post and archway at Elk Trail head

- building trail from Elk Trail Head to the County's service road

Available on our website – [link](#) sent in email.

We are working with the Port of Skagit to finalize the details for 5 work parties, Sept-Dec 2025. This will allow us to get a good start on extending Brickyard Creek Trail on Port property. More details will be available this summer.

Q: What is the project for the Port?

A: Not sure yet. The Port has shared a number of ideas, including extending Brickyard Creek Trail to Goat Hill and following Hansen Creek to create a perimeter trail that connects with NSRA. They are also thinking about a trail that follows Brickyard Creek from behind the Trevennen Hall to the old guard shack, effectively turning Brickyard Creek Trail into a loop and strengthening the connection to Olmsted Park.

Q: Where is Brickyard Creek Trail?

A: It starts across the road from the old guard shack.

Olmsted Park - Jenny

The city's contractor is breaking ground on Olmstead Park in early May. They are building picnic shelters that reflect the Spanish Colonial style of the hospital buildings. Work will be complete for the celebration on Sept 19.

We have agreed to build a loop trail around Thompson Pond - timing TBD.

Q: Will there be bathrooms there?

A: We are assuming so, but don't know for sure.

Wind Phone - Jenny

It's been nearly 2 years since Beth from United General District 304 proposed the Wind Phone idea to SCPR. They want to do 2 installations: one at the Veterans Park and another on Hill Creek Trail.

Originally the county was going to hire the bridge contractor to build them both. That plan has changed. STB agreed to build the phone for the Hill Creek Trail, wanting ~~to~~ to have it done in time for the ribbon cutting ceremony. We've cleared the site, poured a cement pad, and JT is working on the cedar bench. We are also going to do more clearing to open up the view to the creek.

Thanks to Craig and Lynn for helping with invasive holly control!

A link sent out in the last e-news. Check the [Trail Updates](#) page on our website for more info.

Q: When will the bench be installed?

A: Not sure yet, but definitely by the end of June. The wood is fresh and needs to dry out for a while before we can coat it with varnish.

Comments about how excited people are to visit the wind phone.

Ribbon Cutting on Sept 19, 2025 - Jenny

The SWIFT partners are hosting an afternoon of celebration on Sept 19, 2025. Explore Olmsted Park (Thompson Pond), the historic hospital, and then attend a ribbon cutting at Song Sparrow Bridge.

The event will be attended by local and state leaders. They are also organizing a blessing ceremony from the Upper Skagit People. It would be great to have a good showing from our trail volunteers. [Link](#) in email and on our website.

Q: What time does it start? What is going to happen there? Will there be food?

A: Event is scheduled from 1-3pm. The event is being organized by the SWIFT work group partners. We don't have any more details right now, but will share them when we do.

Parks Dept Steering Committee - Jenny

Jenny attended Skagit County Parks Dept Art and Interpretive Signage Steering Committee for NSRA on April 3.

- Hosted by [Studio Understory](#), certified interpretive planners and Brian Adams, Director SCPR
- 10-12 people in attendance, representing different aspects of NSRA
- Theme for art & interpretive story-telling is "healing"
 - o Upper Skagit People
 - o Veterans
 - o Hospital
 - o Nature
- There will be one major piece of sculpture placed near the Veterans Park (visibility to park host) – a collaboration between an Upper Skagit artist and 2 sculptures

- Potential for 1 or 2 smaller pieces in other places in the park
- Looking for solutions to graffiti damage/how to encourage sense of stewardship
- Hiring full-time park maintenance person for NSRA
- There will be a park “walk-through” to look at locations and further explore
- Second meeting will be in June

Q: Will the second meeting be open to the public?

A: Not sure. If it is, we will share the link with you

Q: Who are the artists?

A: Milo White, Lin McJunkin, and Jay Bowen who is also an Upper Skagit elder. They collaborated on the totem sculpture at Riverfront Park in Mount Vernon.

Planning Meeting, 4:30 pm, Iron Mountain: Headcount 18