

June 14, 2025

Skagit Trail Builders Advisory Committee Meeting

Notes taken by Jenny Sandbo, Advisory Committee Chair

29 Volunteers in attendance

Congrats to our recent graduates! Wave your arms! – Jenny

Two students with Rainbow Girls and four students from Sedro-Woolley High School. The group clapped, cheered, and congratulated them.

Varsity in Volunteerism – Jenny/Sativa

Congratulations to our current Youth Leader, **Sativia Espinoza and** (former youth leader) **RJ Barnes**, on being awarded their letters in Varsity in Volunteerism. (RJ not in attendance)

Sativia: I got over 200 hours and lettered in VIV.

[Applause and calls of congrats from the group]

Youth Leader Internship Application for 2025-2026 - Jenny

With Sativia, Shylee and Alex headed off for college, it's time for us to recruit a new set of youth leaders.

We worked with Beth at UGD304 to set-up the application, decision-making rubric, and interview questions. The application is open to students in Skagit between the ages of 15-21, so high school and early college age. The application is available to download online. Deadline to apply is June 20.

Alex commented: Being a Youth Leader was a really good experience for me. I got the McIntyre Scholarship and I don't think I would have got it without being a Youth Leader with STB.

Skagit Community Foundation Grant for Power Carrier – JT

We were awarded \$8500 to purchase a new power carrier by the Skagit Community Foundation. The Canycom was in stock locally, so we were able to take ownership of it right away. We'll be using it today.

No questions or comments

Art & Interpretive Steering Committee – Jenny

Skagit County Parks and Rec has hired Studio Understory, a local company that provides project management and interpretive experience design for museums, parks, and agencies.

I represent Skagit Trail Builders as part of the committee that includes historians, artists, and local agency managers. We've had 2 meetings so far. This is a long-term project and costly project and is still very much in the development stage.

The theme is healing – for the Skagit People, the land, animals, and the historic hospital. This also ties in with the Veteran's Park and the Outdoors RX program the park is launching soon.

There will be at least one major piece of interactive art designed by local artists Milo White, Lin McJunkin (artists operating Trinky Busiu in SW), and Upper Skagit artist Jay Bowen. This trio created the totem at Riverside Park in downtown MV.

There will be interpretive signage at some of the historic farm sites, natural view points, with due respect given to the history of the Skagit People.

Next step in the project is for Director Brian Adams to walk the park with the artists and project managers to look at site potential.

Question: Is the Parks dept going to put up way-finding signage, as well?

Answer: Yes. Wayfinding is a separate project from Art and Interpretive Signage. The latest we've heard is they will be installing it before the Ribbon Cutting in Sept.

Outdoors RX Steering Committee – Jenny & JT

We are participating in a multi-agency effort to bring a new initiative to Skagit County aimed at promoting the health and well-being of our communities through outdoor recreation. The focus is primarily on youth.

We attended the first meeting on Weds, June 12. It included a presentation from Recreation Northwest about their Parkscription's program, a short talk from a representative from Mount Vernon School District explaining their challenges and opportunities. As a group we discussed funding, shared our support for the initiative and perspectives on how we might collaborate to develop a program.

Agencies in attendance: STB, WTA, Skagit Land Trust, AFCL, Parks and Rec, Skagit Fisheries Enhancement, United General District 304, and Skagit Boys and Girls Club.

Next meeting will be in 4-6 weeks and will include more people and agencies. I believe this meeting will be open to anyone who would like to be involved, so I will share the meeting invite when it is scheduled.

No questions or comments

Scope of Work/Site Walk with SCP&R – JT & Paul

Re-Cap of site visit: Parks approved of the work we are doing today at the Pump House Bridge.

We also discussed the potential of stewardship activities to provide a backstop for the maintenance staff. The parks dept was very clear that they do not want us doing any work that might take work away from SCP&R employees. They are union workers, and work like mowing the meadow is seen as their responsibility. We are allowed to trim vegetation using hand tools that is not the way we want to use volunteer time and energy. In the meantime, we do not want to see the trails become overgrown before a full-time maintenance person is hired in 2026.

The Parks Dept has not committed to a maintenance plan for the trails, but we will continue to advocate for a stewardship plan with the SWIFT workgroup.

The mowing that occurred on June 12 or 13 came as a surprise to STB leadership. We are glad for it and will express our gratitude.

Notes are posted on our website under Scope of Work.

Comments from the group about the “surprise” mowing. “they mowed in the wrong place, including on Port property;”, “they mowed down the lupines that we had so carefully cleared around”, “they didn’t mow in the meadow where it really needs it”, “they left thick vegetation cuttings on the trail surface, should we clean that up today?”

Q Are we going to be clearing vegetation at every work party?

A: No, we only have 1 more work party before summer. We need to find out what the parks dept is planning before we create our work party plan for June 28.

Q: What can we do to encourage the Parks Dept to steward the trails? Can we set up a QR code for trail users to send in comments?

A: That would be up to the Parks Dept.

Q: Can we contact the Parks Dept to show our support for stewardship?

A: Yes. Their contact info is on their website

Q: Can we create an adopt-a-trail program?

A: That would need to be led by the Parks Dept, but we are open to organizing work parties. It has been discussed in SWIFT workgroup meetings.

Song Sparrow Bridge Ribbon Cutting Sept 19 - Jenny

Event starts at 1pm at Olmstead Park & SWIFT Campus Open Houses

Meet at Dovetail Bridge at 2:30 pm to walk together to Song Sparrow Bridge for the ceremony. We will be joined by county commissioners, legislators, and other influential people in the community.

Question: What is happening at 1pm?

Answer: There are more details forthcoming from SCP&R, etc. We will share when we have them. What we know is that there will be an open house at Olmsted Park and the historic hospital before we meet at the Dovetail bridge to walk out for the ribbon cutting.

End of Year BBQ June 28 – Jenny

We are celebrating the successful completion of our build year and our amazing community of volunteers who made it possible! Join us for a day of volunteering and a wrap party at the trailhead!

We are expecting about 50 people to attend

Thanks to Jeremy, Ashley, Anna, Bret, Paul, Michael, and JT for contributing to the planning and logistics. It's going to be a good time!

Questions/comments/thoughts from the volunteer crew?

Kinsey & Bret: Where are the brownies today?

Jenny: I was working on the trails last night and was too tired to make brownies. You are welcome to take a turn making brownies. (laughter)

Tonight's Planning Meeting, 4:30 pm, Bull Pen: Headcount 8