

Nov 8, 2025

Skagit Trail Builders Advisory Committee Meeting

Notes taken by Jenny Sandbo, Advisory Committee Chair

26 Volunteers in attendance

Welcome to our new youth leaders! – Jenny

Chloe & Amelia shared a bit about themselves and why they got involved in STB and what they hope to gain from the experience. They were introduced to the project by our previous Youth Leaders and wanted to be involved because it matches their values and interests in sustainability and outdoor recreation.

No Questions

How and why our work on Port property is different than Park property – JT & Paul

This is our fourth work party on the new trail project at the **Port of Skagit SWIFT Center**. We are working with the Port of Skagit to comply with permit requirements that protect the water quality of Brickyard Creek and the health of the forest. Because we are working under restrictions that we haven't previously encountered, this may make it appear that we aren't moving as quickly as on other prior projects.

We are also struggling with the quality of the materials being provided to us(specifically the soil for building the trail surface). In our first four sessions, we've received a number of different materials, and none are producing satisfactory results. We do not have the opportunity to give input on materials. Part of the problem is that we only have a few days' notice on what work is wanted by the Port.

Our main concern is the absence of a hard-packed, sustainable trail tread. We want the trails to best serve the end users: hikers, cyclist, jog strollers, dogs, children and families. The trails should be usable year-round, not just during the dry summer months. It is central to our mission to build trails that last and long time and require little maintenance.

We also don't want our volunteers to feel like they are wasting their time, doing work over because materials weren't right the first time.

Comments: "I didn't realize this trail project was separate from NSRA"

No Questions

Salmon release in December – Jenny

Skagit Fisheries Enhancement has reached out to us to collaborate on a salmon fry release on Dec 13. Like we did 2 years ago, at lunch time we'll walk over to Thompson Bridge and participate in the release along with other members of the community. It was a fun thing to do and helped raise awareness for Hansen Creek as an important salmon nursery for Coho and Steelhead. It also is beneficial for promoting the work of both our organizations.

No Questions

Nature RX Advisory Board - Jenny

JT and Jenny are involved in a new effort by Skagit County Parks Dept to create a "Nature Rx" program in our county. While the mission and vision are still being defined, the rough draft is "create access to outdoor experiences for children and families in Skagit County for the purpose of improving individual and community health."

Partners in this project (so far) include Boys and Girls Club, Mount Vernon School District, WTA, Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group, Anacortes Forest Community Forest Lands, United General District 304, Skagit Land Trust, the Port of Skagit, and Skagit Trail Builders. We are looking to improve community representation by including leaders from Latinx and tribal programs.

The coalition's goals include providing diverse entry points and reducing barriers for youth and families to engage with the outdoors. Example actions include building an outdoor classroom at NSRA, contracting with local school districts (ex/ every 3rd grader does "x"), creating gear libraries, and providing affinity spaces for mentoring and networking.

We aren't asking for any action from our volunteers at this time, we just want you to know this project is in the works. At some point, the advisory board will be looking for youth to participate in a focus group. I'm hoping student volunteers with Skagit Trail Builders will be willing to participate. It will be a good development experience for you and an opportunity for you to share your valuable perspective on this topic. It would also be great to have some of our other volunteers serve as advisors, for example local teachers and others who would like to help move this project forward.

Question from Russ (retired National Park employee): Are any of the local libraries involved? For example, at Barr Creek (Skagit Land Trust) the Concrete Library installed educational signage, and schools were doing field trips there.

Question from Bret: Is VIV involved in the project?

Answer to both: Not yet. So far the organizations involved are (repeated list of organizations), but the intention is to engage with more groups after we have built our foundation of mission, vision, audience, etc.

Questions/comments/thoughts from the volunteer crew?

Question from Ro: Why are we restricted from maintaining trails at NSRA?

Answer: County employees are unionized and do not support volunteers providing services that they might perform. For years we have been advocating for an “adopt-a-trail” program or some type of opportunity to back stop maintenance on trails that we’ve built. The Parks Director supports this, but their hands are tied when it comes to Union contracts. We will continue to advocate for trail stewardship.

Question: Can we reach out [to the Parks Dept] directly?

Answer: Yes. The contact info for Director Adams is on the homepage of the parks dept website. It is helpful for them to hear from trail users directly.

Tonight’s Planning Meeting, at about 4 pm, Bull Pen: Headcount 13