



Trail Notes

RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP!
BECOME A MEMBER TODAY!

Back to Life!

In February, veteran filmmaker John de Graaf unveiled the rough cut of everyone's favorite documentary project, **Back to Life: The Iron Goat Trail**. It weaves the story of volunteers and their labor of love, the vision of Ruth Ittner and the remarkable history of the Great Northern Railway. Thirty minutes long, Back to Life showcases the area's natural beauty and recounts the Wellington disaster of 1910, the deadliest avalanche in American history. Most of all it, this documentary demonstrates the power of citizen action to preserve the past and the environment for future generations. The red-carpet world premiere is set for 7pm, May 25th at the Seattle Branch of The Mountaineers. Back to Life: The Iron Goat Trail will air on PBS-affiliate KCTS Channel 9 the night of June 2nd at 10pm.



Diana Wilmar and Gretchen Burger capture the sights and sounds of a volunteer working on the trail. Back to Life documents the Iron Goat Trail Project and the rich history of the area.



Youth Volunteer Corps members take a break during a week-long work party at Golden Gardens Park.

Golden Volunteer Opportunity

A brief history: In 1907 Golden Gardens was developed as an attraction at the end of a new electric car line built by realtors to encourage Sunday outings among urbanites. Along the route from town to woods to beach, the weekenders were sold on available real estate (\$250 a lot!). The City took ownership of Golden Gardens in 1922, and in 1927 opened it as a municipal park.

Fast forward to 2005: One of Seattle's most popular parks for beach walks and bonfires also features a trail network, and that's where you come in. Popular places have a habit of being loved to death and Golden Gardens needs your help. Join VOW and the City in restoring this golden jewel on the shores of Puget Sound.

Already, groups have come out in force (Youth Volunteer Corps, University of Washington students, church groups, The Mountaineers and more) and VOW's Al Wagar plans to lead crews throughout 2005! See www.trailvolunteers.org (click on Events Calendar) for work party dates at Golden Gardens Park and all VOW projects.

Iron Goat News



Volunteer Vacation

*Submitted by Sheridan Botts,
Volunteer Vacation Coordinator*

As cool weather lingers, we remember summer past and working on the Iron Goat Trail. 2004 saw another successful Volunteer Vacation, the ninth year we've held it on the trail! American Hiking Society volunteers hailed from 13 states - from the east, south, west, and states in between. The record for number of years returning is held by Duane Matterson from California; 2004 was his eighth year on the trail. All told, 34 people participated in Volunteer Vacation week!

Accomplishments were many: stump pullers pulled, rock movers moved, dirt grubbers grubbed. The most significant challenge was a swamp between two rock walls. Dennis Evans led rubber-booted workers in digging through more than a foot of water and muck to reach solid railroad grade. His team then filled the holes with rocks to provide a solid foundation for each sill. Ten of 33 sills of the 192 foot plastic puncheon were set during the Volunteer Vacation. Dedicated workers completed the sills and decking during the remainder of the season by adding Tuesdays and Thursdays

to the existing Wednesday and Saturday work days.

Ed Burns led grubbers and rock diggers in clearing trail, filling stump holes, and constructing spur trails and viewpoints. Richard Botts and his crew used block and tackle to remove stubborn tree stumps. Bill Rowe led grubbers and rock wall builders. Jim Mattson led culvert crews and rock wall builders, both during the Volunteer Vacation and in the rest of the season.

I worked on the crew at the end of the trail. We were privileged to talk with hikers. Jim Nelson talked to a mother with two disabled children, one in a wheelchair. She told Jim how much it meant to her and her children that they were able to use this trail and how nice it was.

Non-trail accolades go to Richard Botts for cooking such delicious meals; to Ted and Nancy Cleveland for cooking the spaghetti dinner the last night; to Jeff Fox for making pies; and to Cheryl Shipman for constructing the 3-dimensional puzzles.

Tom Johnson, an American Hiking Society board member, returned for a second year on the Iron Goat Trail. His comments, from a letter of support for a grant, reveal why this project

attracts so many volunteers, year after year:

"The trail traverses some of the most spectacular scenery in the Lower 48. You see the collapsed snow barns that strove (with only middling success) to keep passengers safe from the avalanches that were prevalent during the winter. The location of the town of Wellington, now just a memory, recalls the great avalanche of 1910. You stand on the trail and look across the deep gorge to see a train passing through the new tunnel that was built later on, when the tracks were rerouted. Enormous firs and hemlocks blanket the slopes and envelop hikers as they walk along the grade. We in the East have nothing like it. For its historical importance, scenic potential, and accessibility to all, it is in a class by itself."

Thanks to everyone who worked on the trail, we look forward to seeing you in the 2005 season!

We are expecting a large turnout for this year's Volunteer Vacation, slated for July 10-16. Please visit www.trailvolunteers.org (click on Events Calendar) to view 2005 work party dates for the Iron Goat and all VOW trail and restoration projects.



Skykomish Welcomes the Caboose

To hike the Iron Goat Trail is to hike into history; it follows an abandoned route of the Great Northern Railway. As reported in a previous issue of *Trail Notes*, VOW acquired a 1951 Great Northern Caboose. In October the caboose was transported from the Henry Welzel Estate in Puyallup to the Town of Skykomish. The operation went smoothly thanks to Ness Crane, Nelson Trucking, Jerry and Larry Dinsmore, and VOW's Mike Sharpe. Until it is featured at the future Iron Goat Interpretive Site, the caboose will wait patiently in this beautiful mountain setting. Fittingly, it is located next to the historic railroad depot and mere feet from its modern kin (see photo). VOW is grateful for the generous support of the residents of Skykomish.

Celebrating New Trails



VOW can look back on 2004 with pride. Hundreds of volunteers, building and restoring trails on seven projects, contributed thousands of hours to provide safe access to public lands. The year's brightest highlights were trail dedications. The **Ira Spring Trail**, dubbed by many to be the best in the I-90 corridor, was christened last summer. VOW's Harold Buresh and his core of volunteers celebrated by hiking it with members of the Spring family. In October, VOW's Steve Dean and volunteers capped off seven seasons and over 10,000 hours of volunteer sweat with the official dedication of the **Lime Kiln Trail**.

See you on the trail in 2005!

Photo captions (clockwise, from upper left): VOW President Kim Carlson, far right, gets a much-needed assist with a pair of Paul Bunyan scissors at the official dedication of the Lime Kiln Trail; Steve Dean, front row left, poses with his dedicated crew at the End of Trail sign; Pat Spring and son John Spring at the Ira Spring Trailhead during last summer's dedication; a plaque installed on a boulder near the Wilderness Boundary. It reads: "Ira Spring, 1918-2003, a true friend of Northwest trails."





Tahoma High School Students are all smiles after a January work party in the 'chocolate pudding' mud at Taylor Mountain Forest in east King County. Harold Buresh, VOW crew leader and board member, bravely led volunteers in rain and shine (and pudding) on this trail building project.

Trail Notes

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