

Heybrook Milestones Celebrated

The Park is Officially Open

On October 21ST, covered with umbrellas, smiles and good will, an impressive number of folks put up with rain and wind to attend the official “Grand Opening” of Heybrook Ridge County Park. The event was organized by Kevin Teague, Senior Planner at Snohomish County Parks and Recreation. Kevin is a true Friend of Heybrook Ridge, a public lands advocate, and our go-to guy for anything related to the Park. Emcee for the event was Tom Teigen, Director of SnoCoParks and Recreation and another avid supporter. Notable celebrants hailed from the Washington Trails Association, Snohomish County Council, Sky Valley Chamber, SnoCo Parks Advisory Board, Forterra, local Sky Valley folks and Friends of Heybrook Ridge.

There was even an official ribbon cutting ceremony, assisted by Will & Amelia Corson *after* they were deputized “Snohomish County Junior Rangers” by John Tucker, Senior Park Ranger. John presented them with Certificates of Achievement and praised their community spirit by saying, “The brother and sister team have been most diligent about checking on the Heybrook Ridge Trail parking lot. They have a bird’s eye view of the trailhead parking lot from an upstairs window in their home. The kids [report to a parent]... who’s coming and going, how many vehicles are in the lot, and any suspicious activity that may occur... [Generally] the community takes care of our youth, but you can turn that around, because these kids are taking care of their community.”



[Bob Hubbard, Chris Mueller, Rib Horst, Amelia & Will Corson, John Tucker, Tom Teigen; photo by Britt Le]



[Back row: Marla Martin & Jill Simmons (WTA), County Councilman Sam Lowe, Ranger John Tucker, Bob Hubbard, Cate Burnett, Debbie Copple (Sky Valley Chamber& SnoCo Parks advisory Board) Front: Louise Lindgren, Ann Darlington, Will & Amelia Corson; photo by Britt Le]

It was my honor to share a wee bit of the Park's history and to thank those who made the park and its first trail possible. It's been over 10 years since the fledgling Friends of Heybrook Ridge (FOHR) made it their mission to prevent clear cutting of Heybrook Ridge, a feat that required coming up with well over a million dollars to buy the land and trees. Success came via two key elements. From the very beginning, all parties maintained attentive listening, respect and friendly negotiations, including Debra Buse, representative of the property's owner, the W.B. Foresters lumber company. In the spring of 2008 magic happened: an incredibly generous anonymous donor gave \$500,000 to FOHR to be used as matching funds for the purchase. (A journalist from the Seattle Times rightly dubbed that person "The Patron Saint of Heybrook Ridge.") The Friends' money was donated to SnoCo Parks with a couple of strings attached: the lands would become a County Park and would remain public in perpetuity, and only passive recreation (nothing motorized) would be allowed. With FOHR's advocacy, Parks and Rec applied for and received their portion of the purchase price via a grant from the Snohomish County Conservation Futures Program. Demonstrating thanks for their preservation efforts, it was also agreed that FOHR would have a voice in every significant decision concerning the new park.

Louise Lindgren was FOHR's first Board President. Back in early 2008, before the Patron Saint arrived, the task ahead of us was beyond daunting and success seemed nearly impossible. Undeterred, Louise's words were inspirational, even prophetic: "It's a vision thing. It's the dreamers who get things done. The people who are practical, they get through their lives and do absolutely nothing that will give a legacy for society. We are trying to do something that will last, which we can give to the generations after us." All sorts of folks joined us: donors of small to grand amounts of money, time, ideas and gifts; artists, pro-bono lawyers, environmentalists, trailblazers, journalists, photographers, musicians and politicians... dream-catchers all.

Louise was thinking about the First People of the area, the Skykomish tribe, when she wrote a brief history of Heybrook Ridge for our website. She closed with these words: "Those who make this century's footprints on the trails of Heybrook Ridge Park may well honor the memory of those who were first stewards of the land for millennia."

Thanks to the recent decade's dreamers and supporters, the Skykomish were not the last stewards of Heybrook Ridge, nor will the current trail be the last in our Park. Pondering its history and our future with Heybrook Ridge, I am humbled, proud and ever so grateful.

After the Grand Opening and despite the storm continuing to blow, several hardy folks hiked the trail; some took a break at our halfway bench:



[Marla Martin, Jill Simmons, Sam Low, Molly Chachulski, Bob Hubbard, Mariah Low, & doggie Auggie]

Rollicking Fun at the 10th Annual Heybrook Hoedown

Meanwhile, volunteers set up extra tents, tarps, tables and space heaters at the River House in preparation for our tenth Hoedown. By all accounts, a stellar time was had that night: delicious food catered by Kellie Whitcomb's Simply Food team, precious raffle and auctions items, and can't-sit-still music by Spare Rib and the Bluegrass Sauce carried the night. Big thanks go to those who made it happen: Anna Folsom and Susan Susor were the overall organizers. The Corsons yet again donated their space (and Kathy and Blair were up in the wee hours of the night, saving tents and tarps from the escalating winds). Leigh and Malia Christianson managed tickets for revelers at the entrance, and Lenny Gugala manned the keg donated by Icicle Creek Brewery. Cate Burnett scored some awesome donations from Patagonia and Outdoor Research and worked hard on the silent auction with Sue Susor. Yvonne Lawson once again sold tees and socks for the cause. The opening blessing by Peter Ali on his cedar flute set a tone of gratitude and joy, and of course, Rib's band kept us rocking.



[Spare Rib and the Blue Grass Sauce: David Katz, Rib Horst, Hunter Hendrickson, Anna Evensta Culver, and John Brown; photos by Hester Shepardson (and "stitched" by Ann)]

Donations came from all over, including three that we sold in the live auction: a beautiful red oak chest of drawers hand-crafted by Allan Peterson, a gorgeous painting by Patrick Woods, and a sweet-toned native flute from Peter Ali. Peggy Zimmerman managed to bring in two gigumbo pumpkins for raffling. And folks brought homemade desserts for both dinner and raffling, including scrumptious pies from Bruce Albert and Addie Johnson, and yummy cookies from David Meier and Lynn Kelly.



[Carol Cochran wins the native cedar flute; Jim Elsea defers to Susan Susor after valiant bidding; photos by Ann Darlington]



[Susan Susor wins the oak dresser, as she knew she would; photo by Ann Darlington]

Two kids especially deserve shout-outs: Nathan Casper started the night as my Main Man, and sold dozens of kids', adults', and pumpkin raffle tickets. And Sierra Shepardson filled our donation jar twice-- to the tune of \$135! She also learned a few swing dance moves during a work break:



[Sierra and Ann; photo by Hester Shepardson]

It was, lest we forget, a fundraiser. An early accounting shows a net profit of over \$6,000. That money will be well spent on signage and maintenance for the first trail on Heybrook Ridge, and development of the next one, an easy wetland walk that will also start at the parking lot. We'll start dreaming up those plans after a short breather.

Submitted on 10/30/17 by Ann Darlington, President of the BOD of the Friends of Heybrook Ridge