

Friends of Heybrook Ridge Update

By Ann Darlington

April 2021

We have 3 projects on Heybrook Ridge to tell you about, as well as a newly-formed board of directors, and a new President of that Board.

The election for the BOD was held as part of our 2021 Annual Meeting on April 12th. "Held" had a strange application this year, since for Covid-safety reasons, the meeting was by Zoom, and I admit to breathing a big sigh of relief when it (mostly) held together.

As of that meeting, I stepped down as President of the Board, and am delighted to report that Susan Chatlos-Susor was not only reelected to the Board but also stepped up to the role of President. The 2-year terms of 6 of the BOD positions were on the ballot; there were 4 other incumbents running for reelection, and 2 new-to-the-board candidates. Rib Horst had opened up his seat a few days earlier, saying he was ready for a break but would continue to help out when called on, and plans one day to be back. And with classic grace, Cate Barnett took herself out of the running when the election was stalled by a 3-way tie, with a promise to contribute every chance that she can, especially with the ongoing work for the Erinswood Trail development. Rib and Cate have both contributed many years to the BOD. We thank them wholeheartedly and ask that you too give them your thanks.

The all-volunteer BOD now looks like this: officers are President Susan Chatlos-Susor, VP Susan Cross, Secretary David Meir, and Treasurer Bill Cross. Regular members are Molly Chachulski, Kathy Corson, Ann Darlington, Lenny Gugala, Bob Hubbard, Brad Jernberg, Louise Lindgren, Saeid Rastegar, and Kevin Teague (who used to be our connection with SnoCo Parks, and now works for Sammamish Parks). It is a robust and dedicated group whose work will continue as local stewards of Heybrook Ridge County Park. Welcome all.

The 3 on-going projects for the Park got significant boosts in the past year, despite the slowdowns at every level from the pandemic and weather. Here's a quick update on each:

- 1) The Lower Heybrook project's Federal grant (via the Land and Water Conservation Fund) and WA State-administered contract finally came through in January of this year. There is now available a total of \$432,000 (for use over the next 2 years) for SnoCo Parks to make the following ADA-compatible improvements: completion of the Erinswood Trail, to include modest realignment of the trail for watershed protection, compressed rock surfacing, and interpretive signage along the trail; 2 or 3 tarred parking spots designated for vehicles carrying wheelchairs; and a toilet facility compatible with its wetlands-protected location. If grant funds are sufficient, there will also be a bridge crossing the stream on the lower Leovy trail and ADA-compatible benches along Erinswood. FOHR has already committed \$10,000 to completion of these improvements, and will fundraise as needed to finish the project.

- 2) In June, 2020, SnoCo Parks and FOHR together applied for a Snohomish County Conservation Futures grant for the purchase of 3 lots on the top of the Ridge (aka the "Heybrook Ridge County Park-South Addition"). We were "runners up" for the limited funds, and were encouraged to reapply for an early round this Spring. We tried again and this time, the application was awarded the ~\$210,000 grant. The sale will be completed very soon, and those 3 lots visible from town and up and down the North Fork will be spared from private development or logging, and added to the Park, just as the seller intended. The current main ("Leovy") trail abuts the new property, and one day the Park will have a loop trail that will take some of the heavy use pressure off Leovy, as well as preserve our forested view of Heybrook Ridge. The realtor for the sale, Dawna Finley, deserves a shout-out for her part in guiding to completion this private-to-public land transfer.
- 3) Progress is also being made on the 3rd main project: the creation of an open air "Memory Shelter" and its awesome view of Canyon Falls. Located on the "Annex" property (purchased and donated by FOHR in 2014), the shelter was conceived by Neil McWee, who has donated beaucoup hours of work as well as the project's initial funding. The shelter will be made from the trees felled to create the sightline to the Falls. Its foundation was roughed in from local boulders, moved and placed by nearby neighbor Eric Malm. The project has full SnoCo Parks approval, and its future funding will be provided by FOHR. Currently, SnoCo and Neil are in pursuit of a structural engineer's review of Neil's model so that development can continue. Plans are also in the works for a connecting trail from Leovy to the Memory Shelter, and from there to the Forest Service's Heybrook Fire Lookout Tower Trail further down the Ridge.

Check out the accompanying map for the Big Picture.

The Friends of Heybrook Ridge thanks you for your patience and support. May this year bring fresh health and energy to us all, and our beloved Heybrook Ridge County Park.