Deception Pass State Park

A monthly newsletter for this park’s friends and neighbors
from the desk of the park manager

December 2016

Four Weeks of Foundational Fun!

The Deception Pass Park Foundation and Deception Pass State Park are helping bring non-stop energy and activities for the next four weeks.

December 8, 7 p.m.
**State of the Park**
Rosario Marine Station, Walla Walla University (next door to Rosario Beach)
Food, music, gifts, and presentations by the Foundation and Park Manager about the past year at the park and the plans for the new year.

December 10, 11, mornings:
**Rainshadow Running 50k and 25k Trail Racing**
The Foundation and Oak Harbor High School are providing paid dinners and breakfasts for these athletes. They will be running on every trail in the park.

January 1, 10 a.m.
**First Day Hike**
Starting at the Cornet Bay Retreat Center, we will hike around Goose Rock and then up over the top! Back at the Retreat Center the Foundation offers warm drinks and snacks. The Pacific Northwest Trail Association will offer a presentation about the pathway of the trail from the Continental Divide to the Pacific Ocean as it goes through the park.

December 16, 17, 4 p.m. To 7 p.m.
**Bowman Bay Holiday**
The surprisingly joyful gala of holiday lights in the park, with crafts for kids, music, Santa, holiday gifts, food and drinks for everyone, and beauty to behold.
Annual Park Meeting!

Plan to join us on December 8, Thursday, for our annual Park Open House and Deception Pass Park Foundation presentations.
We are gathering at the WWU Rosario Beach Marine Station’s Lindgren Hall at 7 p.m.
Come expecting good music, good food, brief presentations, door prizes, opportunities to chat and mingle with other park friends, or just sit back and celebrate the successes of a year at the park.

Hope to see you Thursday, December 8

Bowman Bay Holiday

It’s back!
The second annual Bowman Bay Holiday will be here for two evenings this December, on December 16 and 17, Friday and Saturday evenings, from 4:00 to 7:00.
The winter party takes place in the two kitchen shelters at Bowman Bay and the picnic and campgrounds all around.
The event attracted over 600 people last year, surprising us with its popularity.
Do you want to help?
Make the celebration a better success by helping in one of several areas: greeter, parking assistant, food server, lights hanger, music maker, craft provider, or business presenter.
Call the park and offer to be a part of this heart-warming time of giving back.

Seasonal Restroom and Parking Lot Closures:

October through March:
Bowman Bay Campground
Cranberry Campground back and middle loops
Hilltop restroom at West Beach

November through February:
North Beach
Rosario Beach
Cranberry Campground Lower Loop

November through March:
Cranberry Campground Forest Loop
Big Cedar Trail

Some of the wonders of Deception Pass are obvious, such as the power of the waters churning through the Pass itself, the historical treasures of the CCC structures, the cathedral forests of old growth at Hoy- pus and North Beach, and the beauty of the diverse beaches ready for exploration and discovery.

Some of the wonders are hidden, little known, or inaccessible to most people.

Known to mostly just a handful of locals, the Heilman Valley, or Naked Man Valley, offers hidden treasures worth discovering. One of those treasures has had park neighbors beating a path to its base for years to marvel at its majesty.

Thanks to the hard work of the Skagit Whatcom Island Trail Maintaining Organization, that wonder is now easier to find, though still requiring an effort to get to it. The Big Cedar lives up to its name: the trunk is over eight feet in diameter at arm-encircling height, meaning it is over 26 feet in circumference.

Situated near the head of a small valley, the tree has been protected from storm winds above, and nurtured by dependable water in the soils below, allowing it to grow strong through several centuries.

We first thought the tree might be on private property. But as we explored the area, we came to realize it was inside the park boundary, though not by much.

We also realized that the tree offered an alternative route for those hiking through the Heilman Valley. The Pass Lake Trail loops around not far to the south of the tree. And the Ginnett Trail traverses the valley just to its east. Connecting these two trails with the short side trip means hikers can now take the East Pass Lake Trail to Ginnett, and return via the Big Cedar Trail and West Pass Lake Trail to make a large loop that doesn’t require retracing steps.

Trail routing took years of time and thought for permitting as we wanted to first and foremost protect the natural environment, and certainly not put the Big Cedar itself at risk.

The trail building took a handful of work parties to remove deadfall along the route and lay out the bed of the simple trail. Many hands didn't make the work any easier but it shared the workload among so many different volunteers that it went faster. The members of SWITMO deserve a round of thanks for all their hard work invested in making this trail.

The valley is steep; there are a couple areas that will get your heart pounding a little as you climb up from below. If you are lazy like me, I find it easier to take the West Pass Lake Trail into the valley, go downhill to the Big Cedar, and then hike back out the East Pass Lake Trail. Either way you have to go up a steep hill or two somewhere along the way, though.

Below: Map of the new trail, shown in solid red.
And now a word or two from Montana, AmeriCorps Interpreter:

My work at Deception Pass State Park takes on a less-tangible approach in the brisk, wetter months; I often lose myself in interpretive projects and event planning, and spend many hours staring at a computer screen. Because of this, I do not have any interesting stories to tell you, or engaging children dialogues to include in this month’s Current. In the warmer months, long days are filled with constant people interactions, guided activities and in-person presentations.

But right now, we are in the “off season” and quickly approaching winter. Now is the time to think about ways I can improve the Park’s educational programs. It is the time to connect with community members and create stronger relationships through outreach and collaboration. And lately I’ve been scheduling future events for you to enjoy, too.

Two big events you should write into your calendar:

Bowman Bay Holiday (12/16 & 12/17)

In case you missed the memo, we’re throwing a two-day holiday celebration at Bowman Bay. Festivities run from 4-7pm. There will be a $5 suggested donation per family, and then parking is FREE with a Discover Pass.

Enjoy local music, hot chocolate, eat delicious baked goods, see CCC shelters lit up with lights, take pictures with Santa, and feel warmed by the fire. There will be crafts for the kids and more! Remember to wear warm clothes, rain boots, and to bring a flashlight!

This family-friendly event supports and promotes the Deception Pass Park Foundation’s mission of resource protection through education. All money raised goes to the direct benefit and enhancement of educational programs in the Park.

First Day Hike (1/1)

The second event to lookout for is the First Day Hike at Deception Pass State Park. This year we’re taking a new approach and partnering with the Pacific Northwest Trail Association (PNTA) for a two-part event - a hike and a fun presentation!

This Year’s Trail: Goose Rock Perimeter Trail to the Northern Summit (and then back to the Retreat Center).

When: 10am
Where: Cornet Bay Retreat Center
Difficulty: Moderate

Prior to the hike, we’ll all meet in the Rec Hall at the Retreat Center for introductions, a quick welcome from Jack Hartt, passing out First Day Hike pins, and yummy treats and hot drinks.

This year our First Day Hike will take place on part of the Pacific Northwest Trail - a 1,200-mile National Scenic Trail that runs right through the Park! Imagine hiking from Glacier National Park, Montana all the way to the Olympic Coast in Washington. That’s the span of the PNT, and you’ll be stepping foot on that exact trail January 1st.
After the hike, Jeff Kish, the Executive Director of the PN-TA, will give a multimedia presentation about the Pacific Northwest Trail. Be sure to stick around and learn more about one of our country’s most beautiful trails!

More info on Jeff:
He is an accomplished thru-hiker, with complete end-to-end hikes of both the Pacific Northwest Trail (PNT) and the Pacific Crest Trail (PCT) under his belt. As an outdoor industry journalist, he brought the story of the PNT to an international audience in 2014, and then went on to tour the Northwest with a multimedia presentation about his experiences the following year. He began his work with the PNTA in 2016.

And that’s all I have to share! I hope to see you sometime in December.

Paid Internship at Deception Pass State Park

We’re hiring a second AmeriCorps Park Interpreter for 2017. Know of someone 18+ interested in working at Deception Pass State Park? Spread the word quick – the deadline is January 7th, 2017!

Park Interpreters play an important role in introducing visitors to the natural and cultural resources of Deception Pass State Park. This position is a good fit if you enjoy talking to people, working in an often fast paced environment where responsibilities can change quickly, working with children/youth, public speaking and leading tours or events.

Tasks may include:
- Leading guided walks through forests and tide pools
- Working with school groups
- Traveling to community sites to deliver programming
- Creating environmental education curricula
- Creating interpretive programming for visitors
- Planning and hosting public events
- Developing web or print content
- Staffing the Rosario Field Classroom
- Working directly with volunteer Beach Naturalists

Ideal Candidates:
- Must be 18+ to apply
- Are available from February 15th to August 15th, 2017
- Demonstrate a commitment to, or strong interest in, environmental education
- Have previous experience with, or desire to learn, resource interpretation
- Able to work independently and as a team
- Have strong interpersonal and communications skills (both written and verbal)
- Show enthusiasm for the outdoors and conservation

Program Benefits:
Monthly stipend ($1070), affordable housing, Childcare assistance if eligible, Education award upon successful completion of service, Health Coverage, Training.

To Apply:
Send a cover letter and your resume to Deceptionpass.interpreter@parks.wa.gov. Be thorough and include relevant details about past classes, jobs, and practical experiences appropriate to this position.

Feel free to email the address listed above if you have any questions.

Deception Pass 2011-2013 AmeriCorps interpreter Sam Wotipka helps several visitors at the park have a close encounter with a gray whale.
On the Waterfront

Now this is the boat Deception Pass State Park needed.

For over two decades, our rescue responses and maintenance work around the waters of Deception Pass depended on a 19 foot boat made by Almar. The boat handled well, but had few features to make our work any easier or efficient. The cab had no roof, the sides were high above the water, and the deck had little work space.

When the boat had to be turned in due to old age, we then got by with a 17 foot Whaler, again a stable boat in the turbulent waters of the pass, but with no cab at all, and even less space to work with.

Thanks to capital funding to Washington State Parks, we received money to buy a boat that would work better for us in these waters. We found a local boat manufacturer, Munson Boats, headquartered near the Skagit Airport, to design a 21-foot boat with a drop down bow, a three-quarter cab with a roof, a door on the side, and a large front deck for people or things.

They delivered it to us in early November. I had the privilege to motor it from La Conner to our docks at Cornet Bay. Now we are busy outfitting the boat to be ready for whatever challenges lie ahead.

We have found that it is stable in heavy weather, and it allows us to reach those in the water without having to strain our backs reaching over the side. We can gently beach on any of the many islands of the park and get onto the land with a little step instead of a big drop. And it has the electronics to give us a safe picture of the land around us.

Being stationed at the Pass, where people get into trouble from time to time in various ways, our staff can use this boat to respond quickly to those in need, and to assist the North Whidbey Fire and Rescue and Island County Sheriff’s teams to be there for any emergency or critical need.

Good Roads Again

Our park roads have not had real maintenance funding for over two decades -- until this past month. The park roads have slowly deteriorated over time, with potholes and alligatoring becoming whole stretches with crumbling asphalt and channels of water, patched with gravel, cold patch, and whatever else we could find.

This fall, however, we received a grant to replace the worst roads in the park. That meant the lower end of Bowman Bay, the steep section of North Beach, and a bunch of areas in the Cranberry Campground would get a fresh start.

Maintenance chief Mark Lunz took on the task of measuring these areas in detail to order the exact amount of asphalt we would need, then preparing the road beds to be level and free of water so that the asphalt will last at least several decades more. Assisted by Marv Wold, Todd Harris, Doug DeYoung, and Sean Cosgrove, along with occasional ranger assistance, the crew had the roadways ready for laying.

Krieg Construction of Oak Harbor found some windows of weather that allowed them to lay the asphalt down. The new roads are a thing of beauty, if you find beauty in a flat, clean, safe, and smooth stretch of road. I do.
2017 Lecture Series

January 20, 7PM
"Research and Insights on Northwest Coast Humpback, Blue, and Gray Whales and their Incursions into the Salish Sea,"
John Calambokidis, research biologist, Cascadia Research Collective, Olympia, WA
Three whale species now use Salish Sea waters more frequently than in the past. New research, including feeding and other behaviors, explores why these species are coming here.

February 17, 7PM
"The Fishes of the Salish Sea,“ Jay Orr, PhD, research fisheries biologist, NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service, Seattle, WA
Pacific viperfish, northern flashlightfish, longspout prickleback—just a few of the species (many previously unknown) identified in a 35-year survey of the Salish Sea. The report and forthcoming book, co-authored by our speaker, are sure to become valuable references for further scientific work on Salish Sea fish. "If you don’t first know what you have, it’s impossible to know what you might be losing," says co-author, Dr. Ted Pietsch.

March 17, 7PM
"Sounds in the Salish Sea,“ Scott Veirs, PhD, oceanographer, president, Beam Reach Marine Science & Sustainability School, Seattle, WA
The recent Friends of Skagit Beaches film, "Sonic Sea," highlighted three ocean noise sources: sonar, seismic exploration, and ships. Learn more about these and other noises in the Salish Sea. Submarine noise and other human activities have biological impacts on marine species that use sound to survive.

April 21, 7PM
"Exploring the Salish Sea Floor,“ Dr. H. Gary Greene, director SeaDoc Society/Moss Landing Marine Labs’ Tombolo Mapping Lab, Orcas Island
professor emeritus, Moss Landing Marine Labs
research faculty scientist, Friday Harbor Labs, University of Washington

Why do marine birds, fish, and mammals feed where they do? How do tsunamis and earthquakes impact marine habitats? Will understanding the geology, substrate, and topography of the Salish Sea floor provide answers to these questions? Come find out.

NW Educational Service Dist. 189 building
1601 R Ave, Anacortes
Protecting Skagit Marine Ecosystems
Education • Citizen Science • Stewardship

2017 Lecture Series
sponsored by Friends of Skagit Beaches

Lectures free and open to the public

Donations to support the lecture series are welcome and appreciated

For more information or questions:
Matt Kerschbaum, 360-293-0773

Join Friends at www.skagitbeaches.org
It’s a little odd to celebrate a beach, unless it wasn’t a beach for nearly seventy years.

On November 17 we gathered to celebrate the ongoing restoration work and the progress that is such a blessing so far.

The Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group and others have added thousands of beach grasses and nearshore vegetation to the uplands to jumpstart the recovery of the beach. And the sea has done its part by shaping and contouring the beach, and adding driftwood and debris to the shoreline to begin restoring the health of the beach.

I love watching visitors walk straight onto the beach from the fields above; that’s how a beach should be.

The Northwest Straits Foundation partnered with the Skagit Marine Resources Committee and Washington State Parks to remove over 2000 tons of rock armoring from Bowman Bay’s beach, replacing it with native sands and gravels and then planting native vegetation above.

Northwest Straits representative and project leader Lisa Kaufman shares the history of the beach restoration with those gathered at Bowman Bay.

This monthly update is sent to folks who have expressed an interest in keeping in touch with what is happening or in the planning stages at Deception Pass State Park.

We are grateful to have you welcome us into your inbox.

If you are not interested in receiving these monthly updates, please reply to this message and let me know. We have no intention of sending emails that you do not wish to receive.

If you wish to communicate at anytime with me or other park staff, please email, call, or visit us. This park is your park.

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