

## Whatcom Walking Friends Annual Meeting - October 25, 2019

Leaders: Lee Cole, Lynn Colson, Joanne Knittel

Joanne Knittel called the meeting to order and introduced Lee Cole who had arranged for representatives from Bellingham Parks and Recreation to come and speak to our group. Lee introduced Vanessa Young, Parks Volunteer Coordinator, Steven Nordeen, Parks Ground Maintenance Manager and Phil Evans, team leader for the maintenance crew. It was an entertaining and informative session hearing about their goals and mission, their priorities and the many trails they maintain. Vanessa talked about the many volunteer activities available and left us with printouts of the Bellingham Trail Guide and a Brochure of the many Fall Work Parties they are hosting over the next couple months. There was also an extended question and answer period where they answered many questions from the group.

Lee presented a report on the many 2019 special walks. She then solicited input and gathered a list of eight proposed special walks for 2020. Leaders volunteered to organize all but one of the walks. Once specific dates are established notices will be sent to all Walking Friends. It looks like we can look forward to another year of special events. Please contact Lee Cole if you have a special walk you would like to lead for the group.

Susan Dean presented the 2019 Memorial Fund Report. Susan noted that only one donation had been made this year, leaving enough funds to support four more donations. It was proposed that a donation be made in Lynn Bellinger's name as she had been an original founder of the group and a member for many years. Susan spoke to the fact that the Memorial fund is funded by Walking Friends on an informal basis. Members can contact Susan directly to make donations at any time. Also, Susan will process a memorial donation as appropriate but is dependent on members to notify her when a member loses a close family member.

Lynn provided a summary of 2019 dues. \$800 was provided to Whatcom Land Trust. Our funds were helpful in the acquisition of the Skookum Creek Conservation Corridor. Our donation helped preserve 1400 acres of riparian forest in the watershed of the South Fork Nooksack basin. The land was purchased from Weyerhaeuser and will permanently protect salmon habitat, watershed health, landscape connectivity and recreation opportunities for Whatcom County. Lynn indicated our 2020 dues would go to Washington Trails Association unless anyone had a proposal for a different recipient. None was received. Lynn passed an envelope around the room to collect either \$10 cash or a check made out to WTA. Dues should be paid by 12/31/19 to be included in the first published roster for 2020 and to obtain the password for protected files on the website.

Joanne reminded everyone that the enrollment process is via Google forms. She indicated that everyone will receive an email by the end of November with the form to enroll for 2020. Both completion of the form and payment of dues are required to be included on the WF lists. Members were also asked if they are recommending a new member register for Walking Friends, that they also

provide Lynn Colson's address so the registration process can be completed without additional emails or phone calls.

Joanne led a discussion on adding new trails to the schedule. The following changes were agreed to:

- Cornwall Park will be added to the schedule starting in January (Elaine Cress to assist)
- Arroyo Park will replace Fairhaven Park in November; beginning in January both Arroyo Park and Fairhaven Park will be scheduled each month. Fairhaven Park will follow the trail through 100 Acre Woods while Arroyo Park will start at the Padden Creek Trail Head on Old Fairhaven Parkway and go to Arroyo Park. Directions for Arroyo Park meeting point were added to the list of directions on the website.
- Starting in January, the Arboretum Trail will be included year round

Cathy Bertschler volunteered to host a Holiday Party. Attendees can bring treats to share but there will not be a cookie exchange. THANKS to Cathy. Date to be determined. More info will be sent via email.

Meeting was adjourned at 11:05.

Lee Cole

Lynn Colson

Joanne Knittel