

Washington Trails Association Work Parties for 2011

Hope you had a great Winter and got to enjoy the snow other than shovel it! Spring is fast approaching and so it is time to think about hiking and to continue the great work that you did on trails here in Spokane County and up in the Colville National Forest. I hope that you can find some projects listed below that will be of interest to you and that will be fun as you donate your time for the natural areas and trails that we call home.

First, just a quick reminder about how to sign up and what you might be signing up for. Each work party will be posted on the WTA website approximately one month prior to the actual date. Please sign up on line: go to wta.org, choose Volunteers/Trail work parties, then click on the event you want and follow the directions from there.

Already posted on the website for the entire year are the week-long Volunteer Vacations, which do cost money but are well worth it as all of the food and group camp gear is provided, and you get a free day mid-week to explore or take it easy. There are Youth Volunteer Vacations if you know of any high school age people who might be interested. Also you will see listed the BCRT's, or Back Country Response Teams, which constitute an extended weekend into a remote area, usually backpacking but occasionally a car camp at a remote trailhead.

Late season snows notwithstanding, we will try something new this year in March; doing "general maintenance" on the trails we have built at Iller Creek (March 27) and Liberty Lake (March 28), as they are already becoming overgrown in places and the drain dips and fallen trees need to be cleaned out. Those work party dates are already posted on the web site.

Then we will begin new projects at Iller Creek and Liberty Lake, the details of which are a work in progress since the areas are still ice-covered but may include: new reroutes around steep trail sections at Iller Creek, continuing work on the switchbacks and upper reaches of the Liberty Lake trail, and a possible new footbridge construction across Liberty Creek at the cedar grove. The grant proposal for trail projects at Liberty Lake has been accepted as worthy of being funded, but I am not aware that it actually has **been** funded yet. That should not slow us down as there is plenty to do!

Dates for the Spring projects include:

April 14, 16, 17

May 7, 12, 14, 15, 26

June 4, 5

In response to requests to have projects in Spokane County in the Summer, WTA has begun working with Mt. Spokane State Park to plan to do trail improvements in some challenging areas. There are five Thursdays set aside for this:

June 23, July 7, 21, September 1, 15.

I do hope you can plan to come up to the Colville this summer. We have a number of fun, interesting and rewarding projects lined up. What a great weekend get-away, fun campouts and beautiful scenery, maybe a moose.

There are two Volunteer Vacations:

June 11-18 new trail construction at Gibraltar Mt near Republic, car camp at Swan Lake

July 9-16 Salmo Basin trail improvements, wilderness camp along the Salmo River

Back Country Response Team's:

June 25-27 Bead Lake near Newport, canoe/kayak or backpack option to a remote camp

July 23-25 Little Snowy Top - 6 mi backpack to camp, great views of Upper Priest/Selkirks

August 4-5 and 6-7 Hall Mountain car camp - come for two or four days for a bird's eye view of Sullivan Lake and the Salmo -Priest Wilderness. Fun potlucks and cookouts.

July 16-17 and September 9-10: Weekend car camps for bridge-building and/or logout opportunities.

And finally in the Fall we will return to the Spokane County projects, dates TBA.

Whew! That's a lot of dates and places and projects. But I want you to know what's available to you since I'm sure your calendar fills up as fast as mine. I'm looking forward to a great trail season and seeing you again, enjoying the outdoors and giving back to it.

Sincerely, Jane Baker, WTA crew leader
Contact for more information at jane@wta.org