



Snowfall on Meadowbrook Farm Park 2010 Dave Battey photo

Meadowbrook Farm Park

Winter Newsletter December 2022

Winter has certainly arrived at Meadowbrook Farm Park. After a beautiful, dry fall, leaves have fallen, and you can see farther into wooded areas than you imagined. Animal trails are more visible, and tracks are obvious in softer mud or snow. Summer birds have moved on, and winter residents are more visible in the bare forest areas. It's a perfect time for visiting Meadowbrook, and exploring an area you haven't visited before.

Remember to dress for the weather, in layers, and bring rain gear when appropriate. Seasonal flooding will bring water to lower lying areas, and you will likely need boots on some trails that you enjoyed, perfectly dry, in summer. Wind chill is a factor to keep in mind, as Meadowbrook often gets wind channeled down the pass, and may be colder than more sheltered areas. While children and pets may love an outdoor walk, they will both be more easily chilled.

Be especially mindful of wildlife in winter. It's not easy making a living outside in cold weather, when calories count, and may make a life or death difference by spring. Watch from a distance, and do not stress birds or animals by making them move away from you.

Winter is also a perfect time to give thanks for this unique public open space: once part of the vast Snoqualmie Prairie, and maintained by the Snoqualmie Tribe and their ancestors for thousands of years. To have a significant place like Meadowbrook now, as public open space land, is a treasure and a responsibility. We and the Snoqualmie are all now stewards of this ancestral homeland, so please, visit this land with respect and care. Do your part: stay on trails, pick up litter you see, carry out pet waste, and view wildlife from a distance. Visit thoughtfully! Thank you!

Elk and Traffic Safety

The most common cause of death in elk in the Upper Snoqualmie Valley are motor vehicle collisions, and the majority of elk killed are young, less than 2 years old. For each elk death, an estimated 3 to 4 are injured in unreported accidents. Colliding with a 600--800 pound animal is not insignificant for the car and passengers, either, and people may be injured or killed.

Most elk collisions happen at night, when visibility is poor, and the animals may be more active. If one elk is seen, anticipate that more may be waiting nearby to cross the road. Drive slowly and carefully in areas elk are known to frequent.



In the upper valley, a known danger area for both elk and cars is SR 202, between Snoqualmie and North Bend. Traffic speed is a factor there, and if elk are seen, drivers may stop on or near the roadway to view elk in Meadowbrook's open fields. Snoqualmie, North Bend, the Snoqualmie Tribe, the Upper Snoqualmie Valley Elk Management Group, the Meadowbrook Farm Preservation Association and Washington State Department of Transportation have been meeting recently to seek safety solutions for both drivers and elk.

That section of SR 202 is already signed as an elk crossing area. The USVEMG has recently received a grant from State Farm insurance (thank you, State Farm!) to install solar powered motion-activated flashing lights along that crossing area. The lights can be programmed to begin flashing specifically when elk are crossing the highway. The MFPA has improved the small pull-out elk viewing area on the east side of SR 202, with fresh gravel and improved access so that vehicles may more easily pull off the road to watch elk, rather than stop in the roadway. Both Snoqualmie and North Bend plan to work with DOT to lower the speed limit on that section of highway, although this will involve a traffic study before the speed can be lowered.

We hope these changes will improve safety for both people and elk along SR 202. However, always drive carefully, particularly at night, in elk areas!

When watching wildlife,

- Watch from a distance, preferably downwind. Use binoculars or spotting scopes.
- If the animal moves away, you are too close
- Talk quietly and minimize sharp sounds.
- Use special caution during mating season (fall for elk) and never come between a mother and her offspring.
- Pets should stay home, or be on leash.
- Never approach a wild animal to pose your child or yourself for a photo.
- Early morning and early evening are the best times to see animals.



Starry, Starry Nights . . .

Happily, Meadowbrook Farm Park is still a good place for star-watching! “It’s really dark here!” is a common comment from night-time Interpretive Center visitors and wedding guests, and it’s true—and it’s no accident. The Meadowbrook Farm Preservation Association has made deliberate choices to protect the night sky by minimizing light pollution at the Park, with nominal outdoor lighting, parking lights on timers, and portable, temporary post-event lights used for short periods of time.

Almost all animals have evolved to function optimally on a diurnal light/dark schedule. Artificial outdoor lighting can disrupt sleep, safety, predator/prey activities, reproduction and migration timing and travel. In addition, many people appreciate and enjoy seeing the night sky sights: stars, the moon, the planets and periodic events such as meteor showers. For many reasons, protection of the night sky is important to animals and people.

Light pollution is an incremental disruption. As the population grows, home lighting, street lighting, business, school, sports and road lighting all add to a gradual loss of the dark night sky. Although efforts were made at Meadowbrook to minimize night lighting, the MFPA was concerned when plans were announced to build the North Bend Athletic Center, with sports fields lit at night, next door to the Interpretive Center building. Fortunately, North Bend’s design review process specified shielded down-lighting for the field lights, as well as allowed hours of operation. These precautions, plus the tall trees on the Meadowbrook side of Gardiner Creek have helped to minimize the light pollution caused by the lighted sports fields on Meadowbrook Farm Park itself. Starwatching is still possible!

The International Dark-sky Association is an organization committed to world-wide dark night skies, offering information on lighting effects on wildlife, energy waste, crime, and safety. They offer maps of notable dark-sky sites for star viewing, specific light fixture suggestions and approvals, and design review services for businesses and sites such as sports fields. If you are interested in dark-sky protection, check out their website www.darksky.org And we hope to see you sometime soon, enjoying the stars at Meadowbrook!

Traditional Snoqualmie Place Names

Today we have a special post from the Snoqualmie Tribe's Department of Archaeology & Historic Preservation team!

The Snoqualmie Tribal administration building and casino are snuggled in the shadow of daʔšədabš while ǵəlbc watches from the other side of baqʷab. The Euro-Americans renamed these locations Rattlesnake Mountain, Mt. Si, and North Bend.

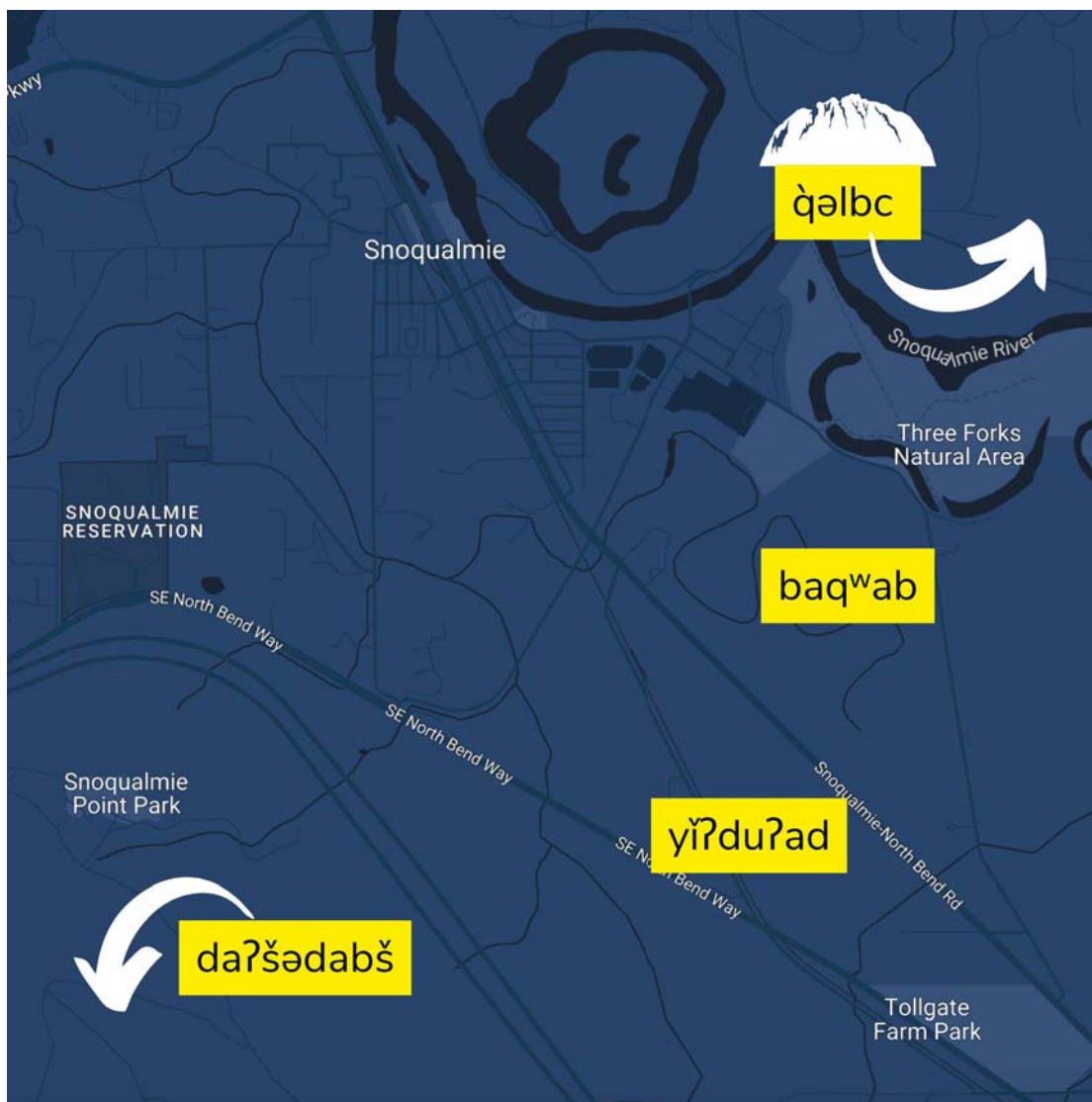
By learning and using traditional place names, we are reclaiming our sovereignty over the lands we have lived in since time immemorial. Perhaps more important, however, is the reclamation of our history.

daʔšədabš translates to "footprints left by people." ǵəlbc (or qʷalbc, depending on your accent) roughly means "a camping place." baqʷab is a general word that refers to a prairie or as in this case a specific prairie.

Our Creation/ Two Sisters story begins in baqʷab, where the sisters fall asleep. ǵəlbc is where they returned from the Land of the Sky People on a cedar rope. People would swing all the way across the valley to daʔšədabš, leaving behind footprints that can be seen on the mountain.

When the rope fell to the earth, it became known as yǵduʔad - or Swing Rock. This is where the sdukʷalbiḡ were born and this is where we still live, work, and play.

The next time you drive to the Administration building or the casino, take a few minutes to enjoy the beautiful vista but feel the ancestral connection we all have to this place we call home.



The Impact of the 1990 Flood on Meadowbrook Farm Park

by Dave Battey

I recently stopped to admire the new Meadowbrook elk viewing area off of SR-202. Nice, graveled area outlined by logs, so that people cannot just drive out into the field. Five parked cars! A family of five were sitting on the logs on one end and two girls on the other end :)

I took this picture of 'Dave's Birch Grove' and will explain why I call it that...

Having retired from my thirty-year career with the telephone company at the end of 1989, I was mowing Meadowbrook Farm fields for the Snoqualmie Valley Land Company using the Massey-Ferguson 175 tractor and six-foot mower that we had recently purchased from Cousin Mike Fury. Then the fall flooding came. Quite wild! In fact, the 'Thanksgiving Flood' of 1990 was the worst in recorded history, with a record breaking 75,000 cubic feet per second at Snoqualmie Falls - estimated, since the flow gauge broke.....



Birch Grove on Meadowbrook Farm Park 2022 Dave Battey photo

During the flooding I had to use the winch on our GMC 4WD truck to 'unstick' the tractor and mower several times and at peak, the only land above water between SR-202 and Boalch Avenue was the area adjacent to Gardiner Creek, where we later recognized was the optimal spot for the Meadowbrook Farm Interpretive Center. Over on the Snoqualmie side of the main field, the water was less than a foot deep and as the water slowly and quietly receded, swirls and eddies formed, with flotsam on top made up of the lighter debris from the field. I noticed that in one area, this debris swirled in a circle and was made up of a high percentage of birch seeds from the half-dozen white birch trees on the periphery of the field.

The next spring (1991), I was mowing this area and noticed the tiny birch seedlings popping up. Having a strong tree fetish, I decided to mow the natural circle around the seedlings created by the eddying water and see what would happen. Over the years, the birch grove has done very well and is an unusual feature on Meadowbrook.

I want to emphasize that it was not until late 1992 that any serious discussion concerning the preservation of Meadowbrook Farm—part of the ancestral lands of the Snoqualmie Tribe—was offered. At the time of the Big Flood, the Snoqualmie Valley Land Company was actively marketing the farm. I was hired to do maintenance to enhance the overall look of the farm and called in to do more of a manicure on very specific acreage that potential buyers were interested in acquiring. In 1992, a business park/light industrial area were proposed for the site.

It should be stressed that the 1990 flood greatly focused public awareness on the usefulness of flood storage areas to mitigate flooding in North Bend and in the City of Snoqualmie, which is downstream from the levies built by King County to protect the City of North Bend. Meadowbrook Farm Park, as protected undeveloped open space, provides that needed flood storage area. A task force to preserve the land was formed in February 1993, and the purchase was completed in 1996: 462 acres of historic public open space!

Watch for Us all Winter! Ravens at Meadowbrook Farm Park



Mike Livdahl photo



Joan Ellsworth photo



Scott Christianson photo

You may have heard a warbling, almost pre-historic-sounding “skroonnk, skrooonk” overhead, or seen a bird and thought, “wow, that’s a really big crow!” You are probably seeing a raven, birds described in literature as “. . .gregarious, intelligent, noisy, opportunistic omnivores,” and often seen at (or over) Meadowbrook Farm Park.

A larger cousin to crows and jays, the common raven (*Corvus corax*) is glossy black, has a large bill, facial bristles, and heavier, shaggy-looking neck and throat feathers. Their tail in flight is wedge-shaped compared to the rounded curve of a crow’s. Ravens average 24 cm in length, compared to the American crow at 17 cm.. They mate for life, can soar similar to a hawk, and can eat almost anything. Wild ravens commonly live 10–15 years, sometimes more than 20 years, but documented ravens in semi-captivity have lived over 40 years. They have many vocalizations, and if adopted as young birds, can learn to say some human phrases. Ravens in this area rarely migrate.

Interestingly, ravens originated in Europe and Asia, and are believed to have crossed the Bering Strait land bridge in at least two distinct periods, first about 2 million years ago, moving south to California and Mexico. After another time of glaciation, slightly genetically distinct ravens arrived, possibly following human migrations. Now, although the southwestern birds are genetically distinct from other north American ravens, the birds can interbreed and the southern population seems to be expanding northwards, so the distinction may decrease over time. A group of ravens is aptly called “a conspiracy”.

At a recent picnic near Meadowbrook, a raven visitor charmed the group with his attention and interest in handouts. He then spent the day trying to open containers, packs, roof racks and cars. He could puncture heavy plastic containers, and fly away with items to open at leisure, staying one step ahead of those trying to re-capture the item to avoid littering. Next time, perhaps the humans involved will reconsider feeding the wildlife! But he was certainly a handsome and interesting bird. Watch for ravens when you visit Meadowbrook.

Spring Classes at Meadowbrook Farm Park

Snoqualmie Valley Elk

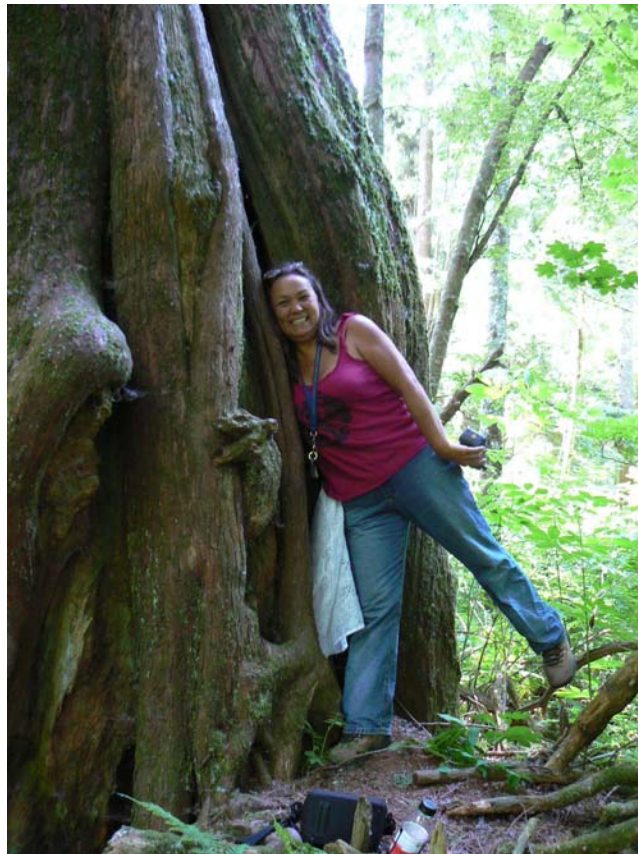
Friday, April 7, 2023 7 pm, Meadowbrook Farm Interpretive Center. Join Harold Erland, wildlife biologist with the Upper Snoqualmie Valley Elk Management Group, to learn about our local elk herd. The USVEMG improves habitat, maintains highway safety fencing, and monitors collared elk to glean information about their lives and travels. Get the latest information on our elk here! Families welcome!

Snoqualmie Valley Birds

Saturday June 3, 2023 9 am, Meadowbrook Interpretive Center. Enjoy a guided spring birdwatching tour with wildlife biologist and birder Harold Erland, on trails through the varied habitats of Meadowbrook Farm Park. Dress for the weather, including boots for possible wet areas, and bring your binoculars. Families welcome! Heavy rain will cancel.

Hike to the Big Cedar

Saturday, June 10, 9 am, Meadowbrook Farm Interpretive Center. Walk through Meadowbrook's woods and across seasonal stream channels to visit a tree over 500 years old! See many local northwest native plants and learn how important cedar was for northwest tribes and pioneers. Dress for the weather, including boots for wet areas. Heavy rain will cancel. Families welcome; hike is about 1.75 miles, and not suitable for strollers.



Visiting and appreciating the Big Cedar

Dave Battey photo



Meadowbrook Farm Interpretive Center

Meadowbrook Farm Park is a unique place, and just right for your special event. The historic land's outdoor open spaces and trails were popular outdoor get-aways during the Covid months, and now the Interpretive Center and event fields again may be reserved for events and occasions. Reserve space for your wedding, party, or family celebration to enjoy the timeless ambiance of this beautiful open space park! Call Si View Parks at 425 831 1900.

Interlocal Agreement Progress

The Meadowbrook Farm Preservation Association's 25 year agreement with the cities of Snoqualmie and North Bend to manage the Meadowbrook Farm historic open space property will end in 2023. Over that time, the MFPA (a 501(c)3 non-profit volunteer group) has worked to maintain the open meadows, build trails for public access, and provide public recreation and education. Rental activities at the Interpretive Center and adjacent fields, managed in partnership with Si View Parks, have augmented city funds to help maintain the open space park.

Discussions continue between the MFPA, Si View Parks, the Snoqualmie Tribe, and owner-cities. Snoqualmie and North Bend regarding the best next management options for Meadowbrook Farm Park. Underlying grant funding restrictions which govern activities and uses of the site for open space and recreation remain in place. Continuing public recreation, education and restoration/enhancement activities remain the primary goals for this culturally significant, historic, beautiful land. A management model that best utilizes the strengths of each organization in collaboration is planned.

A draft interlocal agreement outlining responsibilities of the involved parties will be the next step in this process. Watch for this draft document this spring!



Upper Snoqualmie Valley +/- 1950 The ancient maintained prairie is mostly cropland. Looking towards Mt. Si, Mill Pond Road and Reinig Road are on the left, with the future Mt Si High School and Snoqualmie Elementary sites in the center foreground. The future Snoqualmie Middle School site is on the right, with Kimball Creek Slough meanders showing what is now the Scout Meadow, Camas Meadow, and the lost meadow areas of Meadowbrook Farm Park.



Meadowbrook Farm Preservation Association

PO Box 1462, Snoqualmie, WA 98065 www.meadowbrookfarmpreserve.org

Mary Norton (president)
Tim Noonan (vice president)
Kelly Heintz (King County)
Bill Whitaker (Snoqualmie Citizen)

Jason Rogers (City of Snoqualmie)
Dave Battey (SVHS)
Mike McCarty (City of North Bend) (secty)
Adam Osbekoff (Snoqualmie Tribe)

John House (treasurer)
Ryan Goodman (Si View Parks)
Ron Crouch (North Bend Citizen)
Caroline Villanova (Mountains to Sound Greenway)