

Elk in the early morning on Meadowbrook's Central Meadow. photo by North Bend resident and gifted photographer Don Detrick

Meadowbrook Farm Preservation Association
Winter Newsletter 2026--2027

What a beautiful fall season in the valley! Who hasn't enjoyed the vibrant colors and sounds of bugling elk? Now our summer birds visitors have left for warmer winter areas, the elk are growing thick winter coats, and the colors begin to mute into the subtler shades of winter. Soon Meadowbrook and the valley will show the quieter colors of monochromatic winter painting, where an elusive tawny elk or red dogwood twigs can now stand out and catch the eye.

Now is a perfect time to appreciate Meadowbrook. The summer human visitors have also left, and a walk at Meadowbrook now is a more thoughtful, personal and intentional act. Will it rain? Any chance of snow? What will the wind chill be like? Do I need boots, and a snack? Dressing for the weather becomes more important when it can make the difference between an enjoyable walk, and one cut short. Bring your binoculars to see places that were hidden by summer's leaves and discover wintering birds from distant places. Keep in mind the extra stress winter brings to animals trying to survive cold and reduced food, and be very careful not to add additional pressure by getting too close.

Remember that Meadowbrook has been a sacred and important place for the Snoqualmie Tribe for thousands of years, and we now all share in its care. Pick up the piece of trash you see. Keep your distance from the wildlife who live here. Respect the gift that our public lands represent for us all.

MFPA Hires Educational Coordinator! Thank you, 4-Culture!



Maddy Parker particularly enjoys working with students and seeing their interest in history grow. Luciana photo



At a 4th grade field trip, Maddy discusses life in the valley before 1850, using a diorama of a cedar winter home. Freeman photo

The MFPA recently received a two-year grant from King County 4-Culture's "Curiosity Pass" program, which expands access for public school students to various history, arts and cultural opportunities in King County. The MFPA applied for funds to help expand its 2nd and 4th grade field trips, by hiring a part time Educational Coordinator, fund field trip supplies, and offer bus transportation. We are excited to announce Madeline Parker is our new Educational Coordinator.

Maddy graduated from the University of British Columbia with a degree in history, and has a master's degree in museum studies from John Hopkins University. She has worked at the Museum of Flight, the Fort Nisqually Living History project, and presently works at the Snoqualmie Valley Museum coordinating their educational programs. Working for both the Museum and the MFPA will enhance coordination for both groups. She and her fire-fighter husband live in Maple Valley, and are interested in many varied craft, woodworking and leather projects. We are very happy that Maddy has joined us.

Meadowbrook's student field trips are designed to complement the grade-level modules of the Washington State "Since Time Immemorial" history curriculum. The MFPA has offered 2nd grade field trips for three years, and this year offered a 4th grade field trip for the first time. The history/natural history experiences were developed in conjunction with the Snoqualmie Tribe, the Snoqualmie Valley Museum, plus teachers and biologists. Meadowbrook as a place offers students an opportunity to learn more about Tribal and valley history, plus the plants and animals that live here. As public open space, students are able to bring their families to Meadowbrook for further visits.

The 2nd grade field trips center on the "Since Time Immemorial" module "Storytelling" and begins with a Tribal member or staff member telling part of the "Story of Moon the Transformer", which happened right here on Meadowbrook. Students then visit stations to learn about important plants and animals of Meadowbrook today, and walk to see the actual landmarks of the important story.

The 4th grade field trip is designed to complement the "Since Time Immemorial" unit about exploring the Pacific Northwest before statehood, "Tribal Homelands." How would you live here, in the valley, in those times? Where would you live? What would you eat, and wear? What would you do? Students work with historic maps prior to their visit, then visit stations to explore these themes, do a sewing project and an art project, and sample native wild foods. The MFPA is pleased with the interest school classes have shown in our field trips, and look forward to expanding them to additional schools. We are especially grateful to 4-Culture for the funding to expand our field trips and hire Maddy! If you are interested in helping with our field trips, additional volunteers are always appreciated! E-mail us at info@meadowbrookfarmpreserve.org



Botanist Susan Doyle discusses edible native plants with 4th grade students prior to tasting. Freeman photo



2nd grade students compare the weight of cedar and a tropical hardwood at the cedar station. Freeman photo



Biologist Harold Erland shows 2nd grade students what one can learn about the animal by closely observing the skull. Freeman photo



Bill Kirschner plays a traditional tribal game with 4th grade students, using carved beaver teeth as dice. Freeman photo

Arbor Day, Oaktoberfest, and Elijah McCarty Eagle Scout Project!



Tree planters braved early rain at Meadowbrook to work on Elijah McCarty's Eagle Scout project, and plant a tree for North Bend's 2026 Arbor Day. Eagle Scout Elijah McCarty (center) holds a corner of the Tree City USA flag; North Bend Mayor Mary Miller is on front right, with scouts, families and friends. Keveren photo

Three related events brought a crowd to Meadowbrook October 17, 2026 ,to celebrate native plants: North Bend's Arbor Day, Elijah McCarty's Eagle Scout project, and the 4th annual Oaktoberfest.

Elijah's Eagle project—a multi-year effort—was to create and label a trail showcasing important native plants at Meadowbrook. After consultation with the Snoqualmie Tribe to create a plant list of useful food and medicinal plants, and with botanists as to the best locations to plant them, Elijah planned a trail around the Meadowbrook Farm Interpretive Center. Si View Park staff helped by partially clearing the existing berm, and Elijah and family extended the building's planting beds to include additional plants. The plants will be labeled with the name, Lushootseed name and a QR code that will connect to photos, ethnobotanical information and the spoken Lushootseed name. Botanist Susan Doyle is assisting with the labels and background information, in consultation with the Tribe; eventually a mapped trail will be detailed on the Meadowbrook website, and available by phone, and a printed guide.

Planting day dawned with mist and clouds, and a drenching rain halted work briefly, but a determined team of 22 scouts, families and various Oaktoberfest attendees planted 150 new plants, of 21 different species. Most plants were purposefully not trees (Meadowbrook has more trees now than any time in its long history as a maintained prairie!) but a young cedar was planted and carefully fenced as the official Arbor Day tree. Thank you to Elijah McCarty for envisioning and coordinating this new amenity for Meadowbrook.



Scouts and families work to plant native plants carefully set in designated spots on the berm at the Meadowbrook Interpretive Center. Luciana photo



Eagle candidate Elijah McCarty (right) with parents Janelle (left) and Mike McCarty (center) Keveren photo



Scouts dig the hole for the young cedar planted as North Bend's Arbor Day tree for 2026. It was carefully fenced to prevent elk damage. Keveren photo



Expanded plantings will showcase useful and edible native species around the Interpretive Center building. Norton photo

North Bend and Snoqualmie are each recognized as an official **Tree City, USA**, joining over 3,000 other cities and government campuses across the country who value their trees and have made a commitment to care for them. A Tree City must have a designated forester or department in charge of their trees, have an adopted tree ordinance, have tree care and protection a designated part of the city budget, and publicly recognize the importance of trees by holding an annual Arbor Day celebration. Thank you, North Bend and Snoqualmie, for actively working to protect our cities' trees! We're happy Meadowbrook could be part of this year's Arbor Day celebration.

Oaktoberfest 2026!





North Bend gardener and native plant advocate Terry Pottmeyer is the founder and organizer of the Oaktoberfest event. (above) The Meadowbrook Farm Interpretive Center (right) was filled with booths, games, things to do plus native plants from Mount Si Nursery to purchase. Luciana photos

The 4th annual Oaktoberfest combined with North Bend's Arbor Day and Elijah McCarty's Eagle Scout planting project to bring a large number of people to Meadowbrook on October 17th. Terry Pottmeyer's effort to publicize the importance of native plants has grown yearly, and this year involved many young people as well. There was plenty to do for all ages, including coloring, planting your own acorn to grow an oak tree, corn hole games, and frequent raffle drawings. Interesting booths included Mt Si's Green Team, the YMCA, the Elk Management Group, Meadowbrook Farm, Snoqualmie Garden Club, how to create your own Home Grown National Park, Washington Native Plant Society and Mount Si Nursery, among others.

Oakatoberfest highlights the environmental values of native plants to all aspects of the environment. The importance to pollinators and birds is critical, and climax plants like oak trees are especially valuable. Adding native plants, and a few gardening changes can make a large difference in the habitat values of one's yard. Attendees were also invited to nominate a personal favorite "Treemendous Tree", and posters showing previous Treemendous Trees decorated the room. Following the festival event, Snoqualmie arborist Phil Bennett led a walking tour of significant trees in downtown North Bend. Oaktoberfest seems to get better every year. Plan to attend in 2027! You will have fun and your insects, birds and wildlife will thank you.



Mayor Mary Miller joined the planting effort, and spoke to celebrate North Bend's Arbor Day. Keveren photo



Nodding Onions await planting in an Interpretive Center planting bed. Luciana photo



People gather to view elk at Meadowbrook's SR 202 pull-out, a great improvement over simply stopping on the highway.. Erland photo

New Meadowbrook Website!

Meadowbrook has a new website, with more features, and a completely revised look, thanks to Snoqualmie resident and IT professional Larry Collagiovanni. The website is active and easy to navigate, while some features and new photos are still being added. Look to the website for information on classes and hikes, history and wildlife, Interpretive Center reservations, Meadowbrook FAQs and more.

Thank you to Larry Collagiovanni for the time and work he devoted to develop and manage this new look for Meadowbrook!

Prairie Loop Trail Update

Flexibility, tenacity and patience are prominent themes in the process of completing Meadowbrook's Prairie Loop Trail with its connection to Snoqualmie Middle School and the Snoqualmie end of the existing paved trail along Park Street/Boalch Avenue. Completion of the soft-surface connecting trail is slowed by research needed for the many permits, limited funding, and the current King County planning/permitting grant funding the work will expire soon. Can the grant be extended? Can less costly wetland crossings be utilized? Can another entity manage the grant now that city staffs are too busy? Many questions remain to be answered, but we hope the long planned slower-paced soft surface trail will eventually become a reality.

Meanwhile, the future trail route can be traversed, following an elk trail and farm roads across the open meadows. On all Meadowbrook's wetlands crossings, use extra caution as the bridges and boardwalks can be especially slippery when wet in the winter.

Looking for Wildlife? Find the Brown Creeper!



A Brown Creeper finds a tasty snack with its relatively long, curved beak. Roach photo



Effective camouflage against tree bark makes the creeper hard to see until it moves. internet photo

Meadowbrook is home to many bird species, and has many interesting other birds visiting for the winter. One year-around resident is so well camouflaged that even if you hear one, you still may not see the actual bird.

The Brown Creeper (*Certhia americana*) is a small, plump 4"—5" bird with a curved beak for poking into crevices in bark, and a stiff, almost spiny, tail to brace the bird on a tree. Then, the creeper creeps —spiraling up a tree, exploring every crevice in the bark to the top of the tree. Unlike some birds, the creeper is not built to creep back down headfirst, but flies to the bottom of the tree or a neighboring tree, and starts back up again. Each "creep" is a two-footed hop, braced on the tree by the creeper's tail. The creeper's speckled brownish back is good camouflage against many tree barks, and contrasts with their white under sides.

Brown Creepers live across the US, and Meadowbrook is a good place for them: they prefer to feed on large live trees with deeply furrowed bark, and to nest under flaps of bark sticking out from a live or dead large tree. Insects, spiders and various larvae found in the bark are favorite foods, but they may also be attracted to suet feeders. The female creeper builds their nest, using strands of insect cocoons and spider web to anchor a scaffold of twigs across the gap from a tree to its bark flap. Then the nest is built up with grass, moss, lichens and hairs and lined with feathers. Five or six ½" white eggs are laid, with pink or brown speckles. Both parents will help feed the babies. The parents stay together while raising their family, but when winter comes, the creepers may join others to roost together as a flock, or even join flocks of other similar-sized birds.

The Brown Creeper's song is very distinctive: sharp high notes that cut across other birdsong. Usually singing is done in the spring mating season by the male bird, and is a good way for human birders to recognize that a Brown Creeper is nearby. Seeing the tiny bird, in its effective camouflage, is challenging but very rewarding.

An Important Traditional Tool: the Digging Stick



Skokomish digging stick as seen in the Burke Museum. Watson photo



Contemporary digging stick made by Greg Watson, with elk antler handle, using ironwood from Snoqualmie Reservation land. Norton photo

Variations of a formed stick used for cultivating or digging food plants have been used around the world for thousands of years, and are still used in some cultures. In the Pacific Northwest and Columbia Plateau, digging sticks were used for digging edible roots such as camas, wild onions, and bracken fern. The ageless epic Snoqualmie story "Moon the Transformer," begins with two sisters coming to this prairie above the falls to dig for fern roots on the open meadow.

Digging sticks in the northwest were typically two to three feet long, slightly arched, and had a 5"—8" cross piece handle of bone, antler or wood. This handle might be fixed by twine or sinew or could be removed and used as a hand trowel. The tip of the stick was usually sharpened or tapered and then fire-hardened in hot coals to prevent wear and splitting. Later digging sticks sometimes had iron tips. Favorite woods for digging sticks in this area were Pacific yew, serviceberry, vine maple and ironwood.

Harvesting root plants with a digging stick also cultivated the soil, aerating it, and burying seeds. Undesirable plants could be weeded out, increasing the yields of wanted plants in future years. Digging sticks were mainly used by women for this important stewardship work. Given the time and materials to make a good one, the digging stick was an important personal possession and might be handed down in a family.



Snoqualmie Valley ironwood (Ocean Spray) in bloom. Battey photo

A Winter Hike

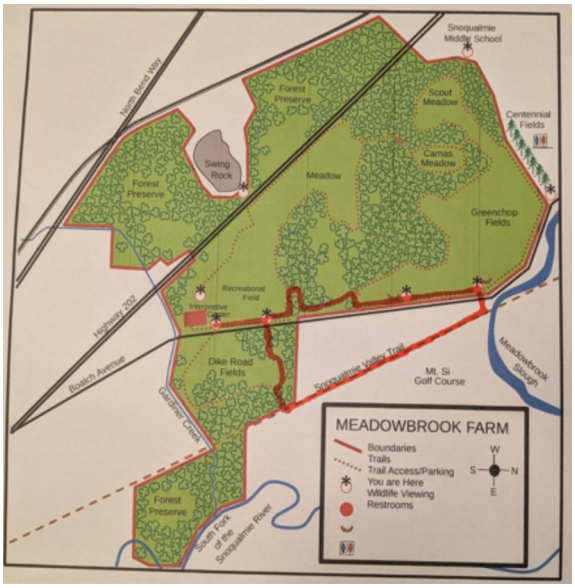


Eagle Scout Tate Nicholson pauses with his mom to watch Cackling Geese from the Aleutian Islands spending the winter at Meadowbrook. Norton photo

Would you like a winter walk at Meadowbrook that doesn't involve mud or following elk trails, yet still offers the chance to view birds, elk and other wildlife? Maybe something suitable for small children or strollers? Consider this route, that includes Meadowbrook's Dike Road Field and the Mary Louie Art installation, a bit of the Snoqualmie Valley Trail, and a quiet wetland boardwalk.

Park at the Interpretive Center, or the Dike Road kiosk on Boalch Avenue, and follow the grassy path into the Dike Road field. Enjoy the art honoring noted Snoqualmie medicine woman Mary Louie, and follow the trail across the bridge to the Snoqualmie Valley Trail. Walk west, towards Snoqualmie, through the golf course. At the golf course parking lot, cross Park Street to rejoin the paved trail on Meadowbrook. Walk east, towards North Bend, and follow the trail as it goes into the woods and changes to boardwalk. Continue on across another small water channel bridge, until your starting point.

This route is about 1.5 miles, and offers a variety of Meadowbrook habitats and chances to quietly see an elk. Part of the route is paved, and part compacted gravel, and all is quite level. Children enjoy dropping a pebble or leaves into the two watercrossings, and walking on the boardwalk. Look for elk signs along the way! Note that you will be walking in both North Bend and Snoqualmie.



The route of this walk is highlighted in red. Start at the Interpretive Center or Dike Road kiosk.

Winter Walks and Events at Meadowbrook!



WINTER BIRDS AT MEADOWBROOK

Saturday January 23, 9:00AM
Meet at Interpretive Center
Free
Join wildlife photographer and birder Luciana to enjoy winter bird visitors at Meadowbrook, and see who may be residents here year around. Bring your binoculars! Dress for the weather + wind chill, with boots for possible mud. Rain or heavy wind will cancel.

(WE JUST MISSED) GROUND HOG'S DAY! HIKE

Saturday February 6, 9:00AM
Meet at Interpretive Center
Free
Celebrate spring or 6 more weeks of winter with a walk on Meadowbrook! We will peek into hidden fields to look for elk, enjoy winter migratory bird visitors, and look for signs of spring at the prairie restoration sites. Dress for the weather + wind chill, with boots for possible mud. Children welcome but not suitable for strollers this time of year. Rain or heavy wind will cancel.

PRAIRIE LOOP TRAIL WALK

Saturday March 27, 9:00AM
Meet at Interpretive Center
Free
Join us for a 2.5 mile loop walk around Meadowbrook. We'll look for birds, wildlife signs and peek into hidden meadows to perhaps see an elk. Dress for the weather + wind chill, and wear boots for possible mud. Families welcome, but not suitable for strollers. Heavy wind or rain will cancel.

PRAIRIE RESTORATION SITE UPDATE

Wednesday April 28, 5:30PM
Meet at SR 202 Elk-Watching Pull-out
Free
Have you seen a Chocolate Lily, or seen Camas bloom on Meadowbrook? Join us to walk to the prairie restoration sites on Meadowbrook stewarded by the Snoqualmie Tribe. How do these sites compare to those at Three Forks Natural Area, or in other Puget Sound sites? What are next steps for restoration? Families welcome. Heavy wind or rain will cancel.

WALK TO THE BIG CEDARS

Saturday May 15, 9:00AM
Meet at Interpretive Center
Free
Walk through Meadowbrook's forested riparian woodlands to see old-growth cedar trees over 500 years old! Learn about the importance of cedar to the Northwest tribes and pioneers, and enjoy other native plants as we walk. Dress for the weather, with boots for children 3–12. Watch for the date soon!

GUIDED HIKES ON MEADOWBROOK

Would you like a personalized hike or walk around Meadowbrook for your family, friends or group? Have an area you would like to explore further? We will work with you to plan a unique hiking experience just for you! Email info@meadowbrookfarmpreserve.org to learn more.

WILDLIFE WATCHING TIPS

Wildlife are dangerous; please also recognize the danger your presence can pose to wildlife.

- Watch from designated pull-outs or trails: the meadows belong to the elk.
- Pets should stay home.
- Talk and move quietly; minimize sharp sounds.
- Recognize that elk may be more aggressive during the fall mating season.
- Use binoculars or spotting scopes.
- Early morning and twilight are ideal times to see animals.
- Respect wildlife by always observing from a distance.



Meadowbrook Farm Preservation Association
PO Box 1462, Snoqualmie, WA 98065
meadowbrookfarmpreserve.org

Meadowbrook Interpretive Center
1711 Boalch Ave, North Bend, WA 98045
425 831 190

Donations appreciated!
If you would like to help with our **school field trips**, or be on our **newsletter mailing lis**t, email us at:
info@meadowbrookfarmpreserve.org