



*Visitors enjoy winter elk-viewing at Meadowbrook. Benches were installed as an Eagle Scout project by local student Tate Nicholson. Norton photo*



## Meadowbrook Farm Park

### Winter Newsletter    December 2024

As the warm days of our long fall merge into winter, those who love Meadowbrook appreciate a different experience while visiting. First, a visit takes more thought and planning: what will the weather be like? Prepare for rain, and consider that some favorite paths may now be wet enough to require boots! Remember the east winds down the pass, and the wind chill that means hats and gloves are a good idea. Wear layers to stay comfortable; your leashed pet may want her coat, too. And don't forget a snack, your water bottle, and binoculars.

The crowds are gone, but the wildlife are all here. Winter is a perfect time to better see through the trees, enjoy tracks in the mud or snow, and watch for browsing on trees and shrubs. Summer nesting birds have left for warmer places, but Meadowbrook provides a winter home for many more northern species. (Listen for the Cackling Geese from the Aleutian Islands!) Keep your distance, and respect wildlife by not disturbing them: it's not easy to make a living outside in the cold, and they don't need extra stress from people.

Remember that Meadowbrook is part of the ancestral home of the Snoqualmie Tribe. Visit thoughtfully and be part of the continuum of stewardship of this special place!

## MFPA Signs MOU with Cities

When the Meadowbrook Farm Preservation Association's 25 year management agreement for Meadowbrook ended in June 2023, maintenance of the land transitioned to the Si View Metropolitan Parks District. The MFPA now focuses on interpretation, education and stewardship for the public open space land. In November, a Memorandum of Understanding was approved between the MFPA and the two cities, detailing the parameters of these new endeavors. This was the last of the series of "transition" agreements between Meadowbrook parties. The involvement of the Snoqualmie Tribe may be considered by the cities in a future partnership.



*In cold weather, elk may shelter under trees that can block the wind. Long, thick winter coats may be 7 times warmer than summer hair!*

## Educational Efforts Begin With School Field Trips

The MFPA's new focus on educational and interpretive activities began with the development of a field trip for second-grade students, involving both history and natural history. Washington State's Superintendent of Public Instruction has approved a "Since Time Immemorial" curriculum about tribal history in Washington. The MFPA's field trip to this important ancestral Snoqualmie land is seen as a complement to this.

The field trip, involving four classes of 2<sup>nd</sup> grade students from Snoqualmie Elementary, was offered in June. The visit involved walking from SES to the Interpretive Center, storytelling by Snoqualmie Tribe member Michael Ross, and hands-on stations involving the plants and animals of Meadowbrook. The teachers would like to return this school year with new classes of students.

After tweaking the field trip in response to both teachers and volunteer presenters, the field trip was offered to a 1st—3rd grade class from Eton School in Bellevue this November. The MFPA hopes to make the field trips available to Snoqualmie 2<sup>nd</sup> grade classes at other elementary schools, pending transportation funding availability and volunteer capacity. Each trip involves six volunteers, plus teachers.

Fourth grade students study Washington State history, and the MFPA is developing a field trip with hands-on site-related



*Monroe environmental education students and teachers get out nature journals prior to a field trip walk at Meadowbrook in October. Norton photo*



*How do you identify a fir, the "happy tree", whose branches make a smile? Terry Pottmeyer demonstrates tree branches to help students remember firs! McElroy photo*

stations to complement that grade-level “Since Time Immemorial” curriculum, involving tribal homelands. As with the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade trip, the teachers would do preparatory study and mapping with the classes prior to the visit.

The MFPA is also working on science/natural history materials to be used on Meadowbrook walks by Snoqualmie Middle School science teachers. It’s exciting to see this new educational focus take shape!



Harold Erland shows some of the many things one can tell about a Meadowbrook animal's identity and habits by examining its skull! McElroy photo



Students learn about the many tribal and pioneer uses of light, workable, long-lasting cedar wood and bark at the Cedar Station. McElroy photo



Snoqualmie Tribal staff member Greg Watson discusses storytelling, and tells the “Story of Moon the Transformer” to



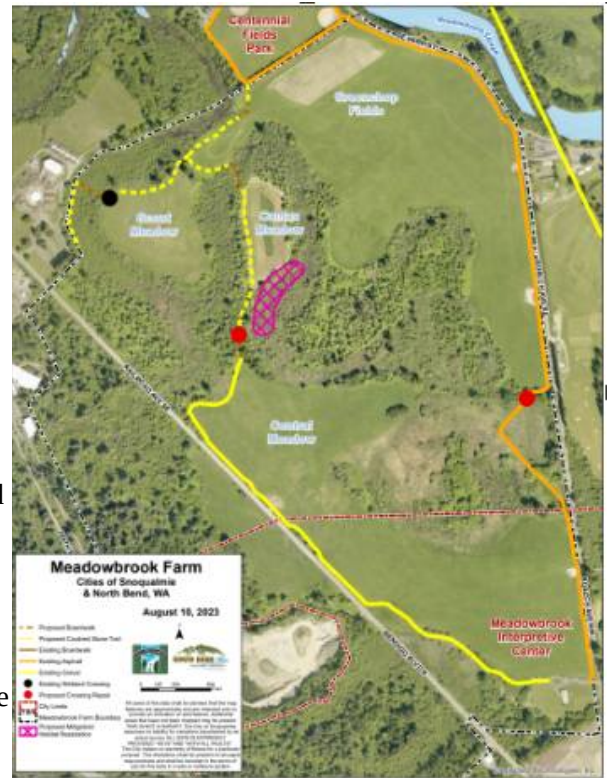
“ . . . and it all happened right here, on this prairie!” Using the Interpretive Center for site-based history and natural history is relevant and fun! McElroy photo

## Meadowbrook Prairie Loop Trail Status

The Prairie Loop Trail will create a complete a 2.5 mile trail loop around Meadowbrook Farm Park, with connections to Snoqualmie Middle School and Centennial Fields (see dotted yellow line).

The landscape architectural firm of J.A. Brennan and Associates were selected to design the trail, facilitate needed permits, and supervise construction. Many studies and multiple permits are required, given the trail's location in wetland buffers and flood-plain areas. Unfortunately, current construction estimates were found to exceed the grant and city funds available for the trail. With approval from King County, the grant will be amended to be a design-only grant, and further funds must be sought for construction.

Si View Metropolitan Park District had originally been planned to administer the grant, but declined given pending other projects, and the fact that the trail section involved is located in Snoqualmie (Snoqualmie is not within the Si View MPD.) Both cities also are busy with ongoing other projects, but North Bend is able to oversee the King Count Parks Levy grant for the trail. Completion of the trail will take longer than expected, and cost more than originally estimated, but is moving forward. Thank you, North Bend!



## Oaktoberfest Event!

The **second annual Oaktoberfest**, an event celebrating native plants and pollinators, aims to improve our environment one yard and garden at a time. The Meadowbrook Interpretive Center provided an all-weather venue for the educational and fun event that included plant sales, children's activities, and crocus bulbs to plant at home. Booths included the Washington Native Plant Society, Mount Si High School Green Team, Snoqualmie Valley Garden Club, Homegrown National Parks, the Snoqualmie Tribe Ancestral Lands Movement, Mount Si Nursery, Wildflowers Northwest Nursery, locally-nominated Tree-mendous Trees, and the event was assisted by the Si View Parks Youth team.

The Meadowbrook booth featured information about native pollinators and the Prairie Restoration efforts on Meadowbrook and other upper valley sites. The event was well attended, and most attendees were enthusiastic gardeners. Many were very interested in the prairie restoration project, and a number had not been in the Interpretive Center before, so it was an opportunity to show it off as well. Plan now to attend next year's event!



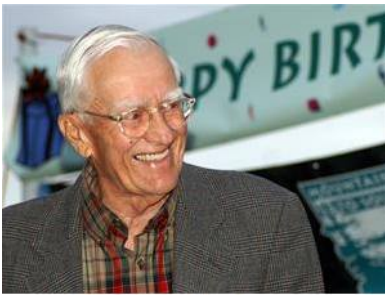
The Oaktoberfest event was held at an ideal time to plant native plants, and attended by enthusiastic gardeners. Johnson photo

## Greenway Honors Meadowbrook Individuals!

The Mountains to Sound Greenway selected Jaime Martin and Mary Norton to receive awards at this year's celebratory dinner. The Jim Ellis Spirit Award is given to those who epitomize the collaborative principles of Greenway founder, Jim Ellis.

Jim Ellis, a visionary Seattle attorney and regional activist, changed the Puget Sound landscape with his community service. Ellis purposely committed to making a better world as a meaningful memorial to his younger brother Bob, killed in World War II. While pursuing his Seattle legal career, he helped unite many surrounding towns with Seattle to create regional KC Metro to solve difficult regional issues such as wastewater treatment to clean up Lake Washington, and to begin an area-wide transportation network. He spearheaded Forward Thrust, creating multiple major parks including Discovery Park, Marymoor and Luther Burbank, the first regional rail-trail (the Burke Gilman Trail), and building 25 public swimming pools. He led the creation of the Seattle Convention Center, Freeway Park, and Farmland Preservation

For his "retirement project", Jim Ellis envisioned the Mountains to Sound Greenway--a green corridor from Puget Sound to beyond the Cascades-- and began to work on it. The effort to preserve Meadowbrook Farm, and other large Snoqualmie Valley open space acquisitions (Rattlesnake Ridge, Tollgate Farm, Three Forks Natural Area) were early projects guided by the Greenway. Importantly, Jim Ellis was a mentor to many people, modeling a collaborative way of bringing groups to consensus by working and reworking issues to find the common ground. His conservation work will be enjoyed by future citizens, and his mentorship passed on to many. He is greatly missed.



*Jim's vision, positive energy and collaboration brought many diverse parties into teams. His mentorship is much appreciated.*



*Jaime Martin's leadership and commitment is especially valued in Snoqualmie valley land stewardship.*



*Mary Norton appreciates the opportunity she had to work with and learn from Jim Ellis.*

**Jaime Martin** is a fitting recipient of the Jim Ellis Spirit Award. She was chosen recognition of her unwavering commitment to the lands and waters of the Snoqualmie people's ancestral territory, to sharing Tribal heritage with candor and kindness, and to promoting stewardship values through initiatives like the Ancestral Lands Movement; for her positivity and willingness to find opportunities in challenging situations; and for her leadership in building partnerships that yield positive and lasting impacts on the Mountains to Sound Greenway National Heritage Area.

**Mary Norton** was honored with the Greenway Hall of Fame Award, for over three decades of dedication to the conservation and stewardship of parks and natural lands in the Snoqualmie Valley, including Snoqualmie City parks, regional trails, and open spaces such as Meadowbrook, Tollgate and Three Forks Natural Area. "Her collaborative spirit and legacy of achievement will continue to inspire future generations of stewards."

## Ocean Spray, a Useful Plant by Dave Battey



Historian and gardener Dave Battey

OCEANSPRAY – Scientific Name - *Holodiscus discolor*, is native to the Pacific Northwest and Western North America, including B.C. to California and parts of Montana, Colorado and Arizona. This easy-care plant should be included more often in Snoqualmie Valley gardens. It is a multi-stemmed flowering shrub, from six to twenty feet tall, with lacy midsummer white flower clusters and obvious brown seed clusters that last all winter. The leaves are (in my words) cute and are too tiny to cause any problems at leaf-fall.

Practical uses by local Indians are very well documented by multiple Ethnobotanists listing practical uses from Vancouver Island Coast Salish to Chehalis, Lummi, Makah, Ozette, Okanogan, Colville, etc.

Another clue to Ocean Spray's usefulness is the universal name of 'Ironwood.' These are strong stems, even used by Indians and settlers as a replacement for nails – pounded into pre-drilled holes! If you heated it over a fire and "polished with horsetail stems" it became even stronger.

The primary Indian food use was the seeds, as tiny as they are. Think of them like a grain of wheat or rice to understand how this was practical.

However, this hard wood was a toolmaker's dream. Uses listed, many of them by multiple ethnobotanists, included bows, arrows, digging sticks (including camas bulb diggers), fish hooks, spear shafts and spear tongs, sewing and knitting needles, mat making needles, salmon barbeque sticks, drum hoops, teepee pins, practice bows and arrows for children, octopus spear barbs, duck spears, and even canoe paddles. Quite impressive!

So, look for this plant in Meadowbrook Farm Park and let Mary Norton know where you found it.

Plant Ocean Spray in your home gardens and build something practical for your personal use out of this beneficial native plant.



Ocean Spray in bloom, mid-July. Battey photo



Ocean Spray in November, to help identify it. Battey photo

## Prairie Restoration Progress

The open meadows of Meadowbrook may look like “prairie” to some, but have little in common with the actual prairie that nourished the ancestors of the Snoqualmie Tribe for thousands of years. Today’s meadows are products of years of farming, most recently grasses and clovers seeded for cattle fodder, plus many of the most tenacious invasive plants. The original prairie that followed the last Ice Age was a varied expanse of native plants, providing many different foods, plus forest edges for hunting. Periodically, the open areas were burned, to keep the open areas free of trees.

Last year, the Snoqualmie Tribe planted the first bulbs and seeds of a long-planned project to restore areas of native prairie. Prairie restoration is a complex and difficult process, and will take years of commitment, but success has been seen in other Puget Sound-area and Willamette valley sites. In 2023, test plots were planted by the Snoqualmie Tribe at several former prairie sites in King County’s Three Forks Natural Area. This summer showed the expected mixed results—rewarding blooms from many native prairie plants, and some discouraging returns of invasive plants. Restoration of large areas of land will be a long process, given the limited ways to control invasive plants without harming the natives.

This November, the first test plots were planted at Meadowbrook-- in the Central Meadow and Camas Meadow-- plus additional plantings at Snoqualmie’s large Three Forks meadow east of the dog park. Hopefully, next spring and summer we may be able to see blue camas, nodding onions, tiger and chocolate lilies and many others among native grasses! No elk fences are planned, as plantings must co-exist with native animals.

The Snoqualmie Tribe’s director of the prairie restoration, Ryan Lewis, will give a talk on the prairie restoration project at the Meadowbrook Interpretive Center in April, and a walking tour is planned in early summer when more plants will be in bloom. Join us to see the restoration’s start on the land!



*Test plots 20 x 20 meters at varied locations will help plan future plantings. Map courtesy of Snoqualmie Tribe*

## Watch for Winter Visitors!

As seasons change, it's always interesting to watch changes in the bird population at Meadowbrook. The large conserved area, near other conserved areas, offers a variety of habitats for many species. It's time now to look for winter visitors.

You'll need to be observant to see a **Golden-crowned kinglet**, (*Regulus satrapa*)! These small birds like dense woods and tangled brush, especially coniferous forests. They may join into flocks, or flock with other similar species, especially during migration and in the winter. Both sexes are distinctive with their yellow head stripe; their backs are grayish brown, and their breasts and undersides lighter gray. Their wings are banded with a black and white stripe. Males have a tiny orange stripe in the center of their yellow head stripe.



*The Golden-crowned Kinglet is a fat, round bird but only about 4" long, tail included! Erland photo*

Interestingly, Meadowbrook is at the junction of this species' summer and winter ranges, and some live year-around at Meadowbrook. Most Golden-crowned Kinglets summer and nest in the forest edges and coniferous forests of Alaska, Bering Sea Islands and coastal Canada, and migrate south to Oregon, and California for the winter. The year-round Meadowbrook residents may be joined by many more of their kind who have arrived from the north, and stay to winter here. And during the winter non-breeding season, they tend to flock together more.

Ready for a walk to look for birds? Remember to dress for the weather, with footwear designed for wet areas. Bring your binoculars and camera and move quietly!

## Facility Rentals at Meadowbrook Farm:

The Meadowbrook Farm Interpretive Center and Recreation Fields are available for you to reserve for your special event, party or business meeting. Imagine your own celebration at such a special place! Will the elk come for a visit?

Have questions or are interested in reserving space at Meadowbrook? Please contact Travis James with Si View Parks at [TJames@siviewpark.org](mailto:TJames@siviewpark.org)



*Enjoy your wedding amid natural beauty at an historic site!*



*The Interpretive Center accommodates 125 people indoors.*

## Coming Events at Meadowbrook!

**Ground Hog's Day Hike! Sunday February 2, 9 am**  
Meet at Meadowbrook Interpretive Center. Celebrate spring or 6 more weeks of winter with a walk on Meadowbrook! We will peek quietly into the hidden meadows to look for elk, enjoy visiting migratory winter birds, look for the first signs of new life at the newest prairie restoration test plots, and return via the paved path. Dress for the weather, with boots for wet areas. Children welcome; may be difficult for strollers. 2.5 miles. Heavy wind or rain will cancel.



*A winter's day at Meadowbrook, with the first snow on Mt Si. McElroy photo*

**Hike to the Big Cedar: Saturday March 8, 9 am**  
Meet at Meadowbrook Interpretive Center; Walk through Meadowbrook's forested riparian woodlands to see an old growth Cedar tree over 500 years old! Learn about what an important tree cedar was for Northwest Tribes and early pioneers, and appreciate other native plants as we walk. Dress for the weather, with boots for wet areas. Children welcome; not suitable for strollers. Heavy wind or rain will cancel.

**Fall City 101! Friday April 11, 7 pm** at Meadowbrook Interpretive Center. Join us for a brand new presentation by Snoqualmie Valley Museum's executive director Cristy Lake! Find out about the history of Fall City, from its geologic origins, thousands of years of tribal life, to modern times as a unique small town. See interesting rare photos from the Museum's collection and find out about the people and their lives in Fall City. Families welcome!

**Prairie Restoration Update! April 4, 7 pm** Meadowbrook Interpretive Center. The Snoqualmie Tribe's Department of Environment and Natural Resources prairie restoration specialist Ryan Lewis will discuss the progress of native prairie restoration efforts in the upper valley. Find out about the results of the first test plots on Three Forks Natural Area sites, and progress on the new sites on Meadowbrook. How do our sites compare to other prairie efforts, and what are problems to overcome? Have you seen a Chocolate Lily? Families welcome! (Watch for the date of a walking tour to see the plants in bloom, coming soon!)

**Meadowbrook Bird Walk! Saturday June 7, 9 am** at Meadowbrook Interpretive Center. Join wildlife biologist and birder Harold Erland to explore the seasonal bird life at Meadowbrook. Walk through forest edges, meadows and near wetlands, to learn new bird songs and perhaps new birds. Bring binoculars and dress for the weather, with boots for wet areas. Families welcome.

**Watch the Calendar for the Outdoor Adventure Jamboree!** Coming in June! Meadowbrook Farm Interpretive Center. Bring the family to explore outdoor activities available in and around the Snoqualmie Valley! Play games, do crafts, and more, from local outdoor-oriented groups and businesses. Especially fun for children 3--12!

**Guided hikes on Meadowbrook!** Would you like a personalized hike or walk on 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](mailto:info@meadowbrookfarmpreserve.org) to learn more.



Upper Snoqualmie Valley circa mid 1950's, +/- 100 years after the treaty of 1855. Present day Meadowbrook Farm Park is in the central area of the photo, with other former prairie areas to become school sites, Mt. Si Golf Course, etc. Snoqualmie Valley Museum photo



## Meadowbrook Farm Preservation Association

PO Box 1462, Snoqualmie, WA 98065 [www.meadowbrookfarmpreserve.org](http://www.meadowbrookfarmpreserve.org)

Caroline Villanova (Mountains to Sound Greenway)  
Emily Arteché (City of Snoqualmie liaison)  
Katie Woolsey (King County)  
Bill Whitaker (Snoqualmie citizen)  
Adam Osbekoff (Snoqualmie Tribe)

John House (treasurer)  
Mike McCarty (City of North Bend liaison)  
Ron Crouch (North Bend citizen)  
Greg Watson (secretary)  
Michelle Chaney (SVSD)

Mary Norton (president)  
Dave Battey (citizen)  
Travis James Si View  
Harold Erland (USVEMG)

## You Can Help Steward Meadowbrook!

Visit this special site thoughtfully, and **help care for Meadowbrook**: pack out wastes, and even any extra you see. Enjoy wildlife but don't disturb them: keep your distance, and leash your pet. Respect this land; we are all the present-day stewards. The MFPA has openings for additional **board members** and **people to help**. Are you interested in helping with our history/natural history site-based school field trips? Good at social media, to help give Meadowbrook a presence there? Help start a Friends of Meadowbrook group? Know about non-profit organization, grants and planning? We would love to talk with you! [info@meadowbrookfarmpreserve.org](mailto:info@meadowbrookfarmpreserve.org)