



A group walks towards Meadowbrook's Scout Meadow on a warm summer day. A. McElroy photo

Meadowbrook Farm Park

Summer Newsletter June 2024

Hello, summer! And what better way to celebrate sunny days and long evenings, than with a walk at Meadowbrook Farm Park? It's truly a time to appreciate this special place with all your senses, and careful observation.

Close your eyes to hear birdsongs from the many resident and summer nesting birds. Can you identify them? Listen for insect life, and perhaps catch the drone of a passing bumblebee. Breathe the warm, floral-scented air, with perhaps a hint of ripening grasses and berries. Sometimes, in the right conditions, you may be able to detect the scent of nearby elk! Look for patches of drying mud to see the intricate tracery of a variety of animal tracks. Watch for baby animals: elk calves are born mid to late June—and give all wildlife extra space this time of year. Taste some sun-ripened blackberries!

To have an amazing place like Meadowbrook now, as public open space land, is a treasure and a responsibility. We and the Snoqualmie Tribe 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!

Meadowbrook Prairie Restoration Begins!

Watch for the first signs of the long-awaited prairie restoration efforts on Meadowbrook Farm, coming soon! Thanks to a use agreement recently negotiated with the City of Snoqualmie, the Snoqualmie Tribe's Prairie Restoration team, under the direction of Ryan Lewis, will begin preparing the test plots delineated last year for fall plantings in 2024.

While Meadowbrook's open meadows may look to some like "prairie" now, they are actually the result of years of intensive agricultural uses, most recently the growing of "greenchop"—the high protein grass/clover mixes planted as a forage crop mowed and transported to off-site dairy cattle.

Invasive thistles, Himalayan blackberries, dock and other species have since made hay and forage uses problematic, despite the mowing that has kept the meadows open. Few actual native prairie plants remain today.

The original prairie maintained for thousands of years by the Snoqualmie people is a complex mix of many edible, medicinal and other native plants and grasses. Test plots in a variety of terrains and hydrologic conditions on Meadowbrook and other local sites will help determine what plants will best thrive, while also surviving elk and resisting invasive plants. Eventually, the best plant mixes for specific sites can be determined, and plans scaled to larger areas, greatly improving habitat for local insects, birds and wildlife. Last year's test plots at King County's Three Forks Natural Area may be viewed near the Middle Fork Bridge at 428th Ave. and 92nd street, North Bend. Prairie restoration is a long-term commitment and it is exciting to see it begin!



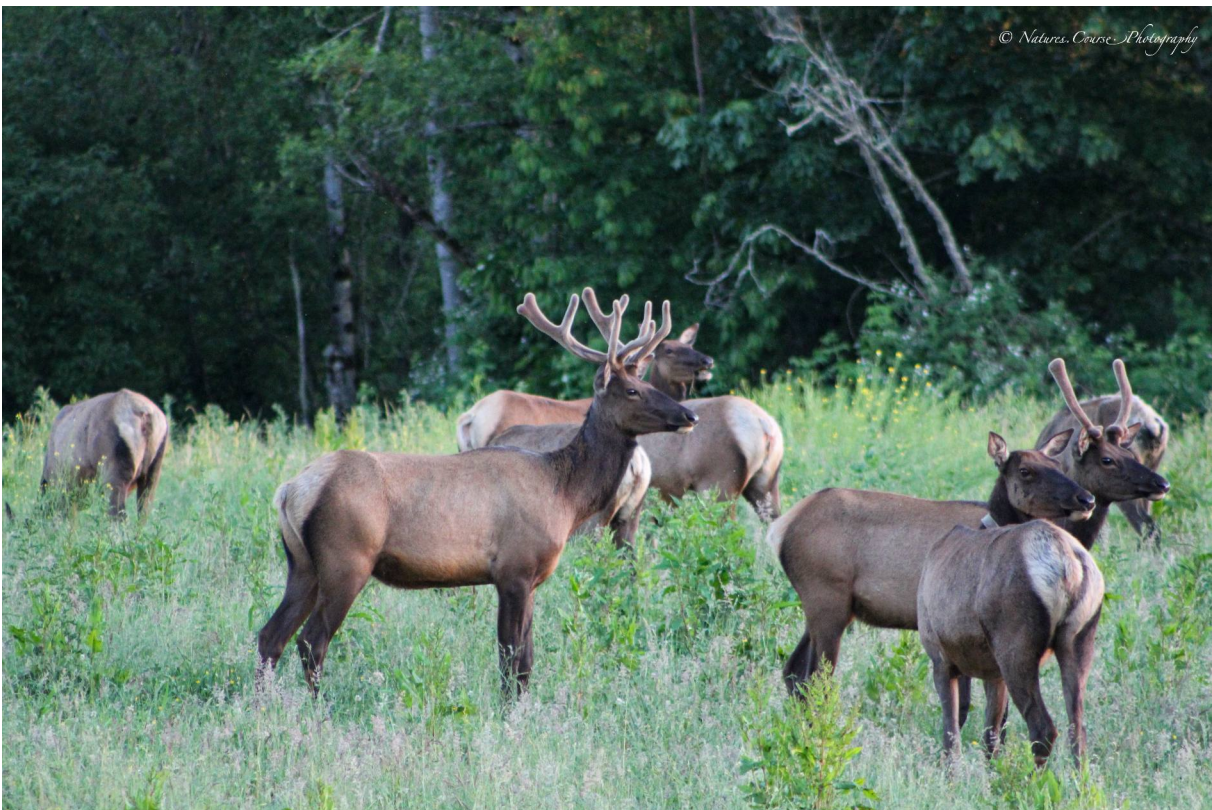
Chocolate Lilies have a faint chocolate scent and edible bulbs. They will be part of test-plot plantings this fall.



Transition Progress:

It has now been a full year of transition for Meadowbrook Farm Park, Si View Park District, the two cities, the Snoqualmie Tribe and the Meadowbrook Farm Preservation Association. Most visibly, Si View has taken over physical maintenance of Meadowbrook and the Interpretive Center building, including mowing, trail maintenance and rental management. The MFPA is focusing on education, interpretation and special projects. A number of agreements related to these changes have been signed, with others planned and in progress.

A maintenance agreement between Si View, Snoqualmie and North Bend has been signed and is in force. The two cities recently completed a two-part agreement as the Governing Body for Meadowbrook, and plan to continue discussions with the Snoqualmie Tribe to eventually form a three-part Governing Body, that will include the Tribe. A Use Agreement between the Tribe and Snoqualmie has been signed, allowing the prairie restoration work to begin. A Policy Advisory Board is being formed, to include the same representation as the MFPA, which will consider policy decisions for the property. A separate MOU with the MFPA regarding educational and interpretive activities is in progress. An updated Master Site Plan for Meadowbrook (initially adopted in 1999, and revised in 2013) will be considered by all the groups and is planned for next year. Stay tuned as the transitions progress!



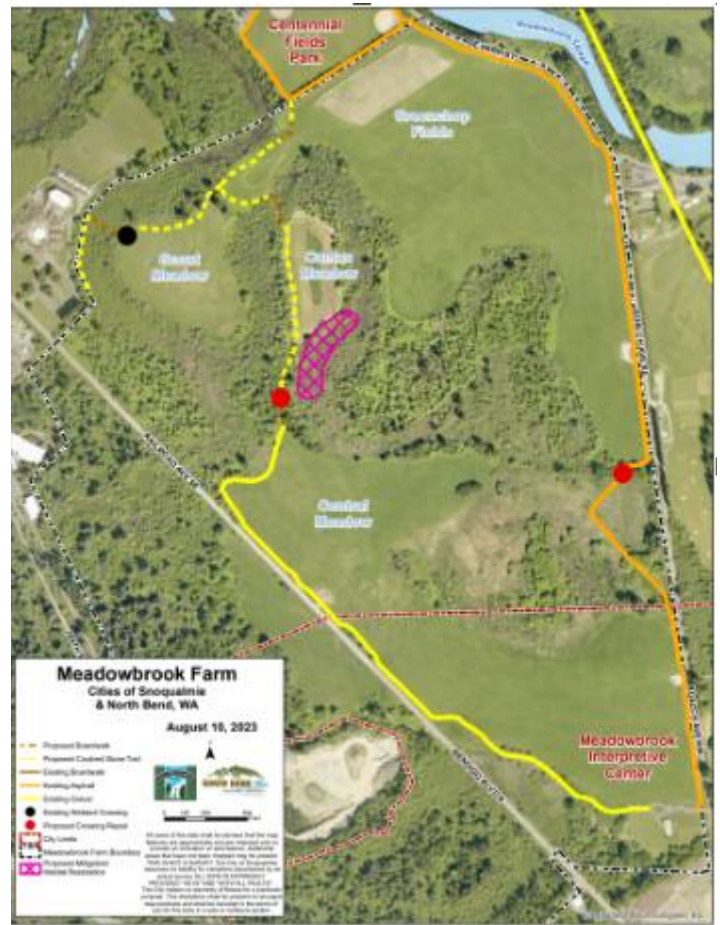
A group of elk in June show "velvet" still covering their new antlers. Berger photo

Wildlife Viewing Tip: “Ezekiel’s Rule of Thumb” from Snoqualmie Tribe wildlife biologist Ezekiel Rohloff: for the safety and comfort of large animals such as elk, make a fist with your arm extended to arm’s length. Extend your thumb. Does it cover the animal? If no, you are too close, and should move back. If your thumb at arm’s length covers the animal, you are probably OK, but watch the animal’s behavior to make sure it is not disturbed.

Prairie Loop Trail Progress:

The Prairie Loop trail will complete a 2.5 mile trail around Meadowbrook Farm Park with a connection to Snoqualmie Middle School (see dotted yellow line.) The new section will connect the existing paved trail along Park Street/Boalch Avenue, and the present trail between the Interpretive Center Building and the Camas Meadow at Centennial Fields Park in Snoqualmie.

The landscape architectural firm of J.A Brennan and Associates were chosen to design the trail, facilitate the necessary permits, and supervise construction. The firm has worked on similar sensitive-area trail projects, and is presently analyzing construction cost estimates to determine if the entirety of the project can be achieved with available grant funds, or if phasing or additional funding is needed. Many studies are required as part of the permitting process, given the trail's location in wetland buffers and floodplain areas.



Outdoor Adventure Jamboree!

MFPA volunteers enjoyed participating in this year's Si View-sponsored Outdoor Adventure Jamboree at the Meadowbrook Interpretive Center June 26. The free, family oriented summer kick-off event is aimed at elementary school kids, and features hands-on outdoor summer activities. This year's event hosted an estimated 150 children, with 14 booths offering things to do. The MFPA activity included decorating and building a personal first aid kit with carrying pouch, gloves, band-aids and various first aid supplies plus call-for-help whistle, to tuck in a knapsack for summer adventures.



Many families and students completed their "passports" by visiting all the booths, for many fun activities. Norton photo



Students enjoyed putting together items for their own first aid kits. The theme complemented other booths—KC Search and Rescue, Fire Department, Si View Pool's water safety demonstration. Norton photo.

Field Trips to Meadowbrook: Snoqualmie Elementary 2nd Grades!

The MFPA began its new focus on education and interpretation with two days of field trips in June, hosting four 2nd grade classes from Snoqualmie Elementary. Washington state has a mandated school curriculum, “Since Time Immemorial” –age-appropriate, topic-oriented Native American history--and this field trip was planned to augment the K-2 grade “Storytelling” unit.

With permission of the Snoqualmie Tribe, the story of Moon the Transformer and how he gave the plants and animals their present forms, was featured. Students then rotated through activities including plant identification, uses of cedar, animal skulls, and assembling and decorating a booklet of information. Prior to the trip, the students worked with maps of Meadowbrook and the Snoqualmies’ ancestral lands, and discussed the importance of these lands to the Tribe. The SES students walked to the Interpretive Center from school, but the MFPA hopes funding to offer bus transportation to the other elementary schools may be achieved in the future, to offer the field trip to them also. Thank you to SES principal John Norberg, the 2nd grade teaching team, and the MFPA volunteers.



Snoqualmie Tribe member Michael Ross told the "Moon the Transformer" story to the second graders. The drum was a gift to the SES 2nd grade classes!



Terry Pottmeyer helped students learn to distinguish four major local evergreen trees.



Harold Erland discussed animal skulls, and what can be learned about the animal from them.



Booklets included maps and information about Meadowbrook, plants and animals.



Nonda Sim and Sallie McLaughlin explained cedar rubbings and booklet assembly.



Students display finished booklets, with maps and decorations that reflected the story.



Mary Norton showed some properties of cedar, and a variety of early uses.



Students learned to tell if an animal was predator or prey, carnivore, herbivore or omnivore.



Cedar bark was used in this 100+ year old basket (left), and a more modern one (right).

New Interpretive Signs at Meadowbrook!

Visitors will be excited and pleased to see a new series of interpretive signs at Meadowbrook Farm Park this summer, involving both the long human history and the natural history of this beautiful land. Centered around the trail system, the new signs were developed in cooperation with the Snoqualmie Tribe, Snoqualmie Valley Historical Museum, the Upper Snoqualmie Valley Elk Management Group, and the Snoqualmie Valley Beekeepers. The signs were designed to deepen appreciation for Meadowbrook's significance as a sacred site and ancestral land for the Snoqualmie Tribe, to help visitors appreciate the amazing natural world of Meadowbrook's fields and forests, and to engage visitors to join as thoughtful present-day stewards of this special open space. The signs were funded by a grant from **King County 4-Culture, support from the Whitaker Foundation, and the MFPA**. The sturdy, high pressure laminate signs were designed by Ed Hazen of Fall City, manufactured by Fossil Graphics of New York, and installed by FastSigns of Issaquah, in conjunction with Si View Park. Visit soon, to enjoy them in person! **Thank you, 4-Culture, Whitaker Foundation, and all those involved** with producing and installing the new signs!



A specialist from Issaquah's FastSigns trims the extra bolts on one of the new signs. Juetten photo



Visitors view the newly installed "Pollinators of the Snoqualmie Valley" sign near the Snoqualmie Valley Beekeepers Apiary on Meadowbrook. Norton photo

Highbush Cranberry on Meadowbrook Farm and the Snoqualmie Valley

by Dave Battey

Did you know that we have a native cranberry? No, it does not grow in a marsh and is not genetically related to our Thanksgiving cranberry. The scientific name is *Viburnum trilobum*, the common name is highbush cranberry, and some even refer to it as a small tree! It is a wonderful ornamental for your yard, with pretty white flowers, bright red berries that persist through winter and beautiful fall leaf color. Historically, it was more prevalent in our Valley and early resident Dio Reinig mentions that some early settlers used this plant to help them choose their land claims.



High Bush Cranberry in bloom. It is closely related to the East-Asian native that we call a Snowball Bush. Battey photo

To quote Dio, from a *Snoqualmie Valley Record* article dated August 13, 1959, "I knew most of the homesteaders who staked claims in the early 1890's and even before. Several townships were not surveyed until after 1902. Walter Fuller was one of the first to stake his claim. It was located near what is now called Fuller Mountain and he took it out sometime in 1880. Mr. Fuller came from Vermont and wanted a cranberry marsh. He told me that he and a man by the name of Brockaway (since shortened to Brockway, for the creek west of the Indian Hill neighborhood), climbed Mount Si to take a look over the country and from that high point located their claims.



High Bush Cranberry on Meadowbrook, near the Dike Road. Battey photo

Mr. Brockaway settled on what is now the Monte Vista Farms. There were wild cranberries there and on Mr. Fuller's claim as well, but Mr. Fuller's was the largest, about 20 acres."

Your author's first introduction to highbush cranberries was in the yard of the August Lovegren home in Preston. This impressive home was built by the founder of the Preston Mill and has nice, historic, foundation plantings. I next noticed them on Tollgate Farm, off North Bend Way, between the cow fencing and the highway. Then on Meadowbrook Farm's King County Trail, on the North Bend end, almost to Sydney Avenue and finally, a nice big patch, on Meadowbrook Farm to the right of the Dike Road.



High Bush Cranberry showing fall color, at Monte Vista Farm. Battey photo

The berries need a frost or two before being more edible to humans, but it is not just the pioneers and the Snoqualmie people that have enjoyed the berries over the



High Bush Cranberry on Tollgate Farm. Battey photo

years, but birds, deer, raccoons, chipmunks, squirrels, skunks, mice, rabbits, robins, etc.. Medical uses for local peoples included using the bark as a cold remedy, cough relief, and an upset stomach remedy. Keep on the lookout for this beautiful, historic plant, as you enjoy our Valley!

Dave Battey



Meadowbrook Farm Preservation Association

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



Tim Noonan ((vice president)
Mary Norton (president)
Kelly Heintz (King County)
Travis James (Si View Parks)
Adam Osbekoff (Snoqualmie Tribe)

Caroline Villanova (Mountains to Sound Greenway)
Emily Arteche(City of Snoqualmie)
Mike McCarty (City of North Bend)
Bill Whitaker (Snoqualmie Citizen)
Greg Watson (Citizen at large)

John House (treasurer)
Dave Battey (SVHS)
Ron Crouch (North Bend Citizen)
Harold Erland (USVEMG)

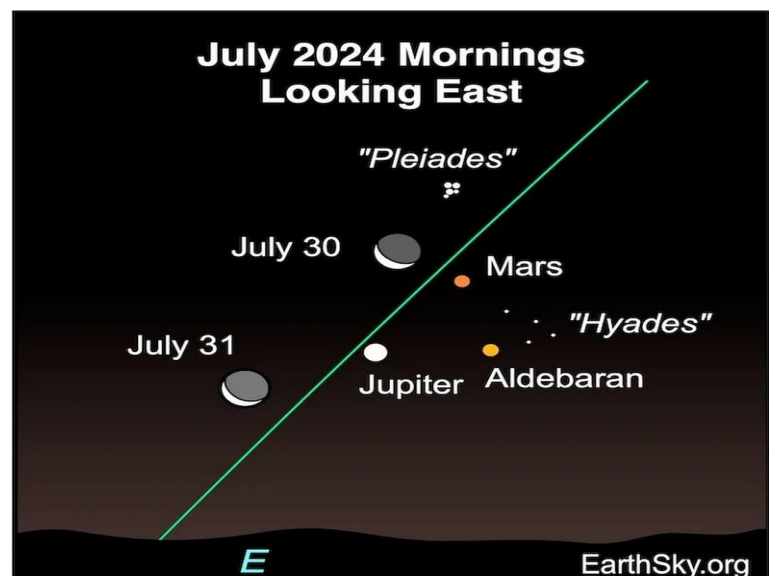
Enjoy Meadowbrook's Dark Night Sky!



The lights, colors and motion of the Aurora Borealis event in May 2024 was especially appreciated at Meadowbrook. Noonan photo

External lighting has been deliberately kept minimal at Meadowbrook, with parking lights on timers, and portable event lighting, to protect the night sky. The expansive sky over Meadowbrook's open space is especially significant when there are celestial phenomena happening. In May, many people gathered in the fields to watch the Aurora Borealis. Consider the wide skies of Meadowbrook for your next local astronomical viewing!

Early mornings in late July (July 30–31) will show a **gathering of stars and planets**, with a crescent moon in the eastern sky. The **Perseid meteor shower** will peak between August 11 and 12, with an exciting display of shooting stars. Look north from 10 pm on. On August 14, look east between 2 and 5 am, for the **conjunction of Jupiter and Mars**, visible with the naked eye, or even better, with binoculars. If skies are clear Sept. 17, a very **partial eclipse of the moon** will be visible between 7:16 and 8:16 pm.



Coming Soon to Meadowbrook Interpretive Center!

- **Build Your Own Northwest Coast Hand Drum:** July 6 and 13, 9–11 am. Build your own NW Coast style wooden drum and beater, guided by educator/historian Greg Watson. Use and enjoy for a lifetime! High school students or adults. Materials \$100/ Pre-register with Greg at redclayhalo@q.com
- **North Bend 101:** August 30, 7 pm Join the Snoqualmie Valley Historical Museum's director Cristy Lake to find out about the history of North Bend. Beginning with the last ice age, discover why this valley has been important to people for thousands of years. See special photos from the Museum's collection. Families welcome!
- **Fall Bird Walk:** September 14, 9 am. Join biologist/birdwatcher Harold Erland for a fall walk on Meadowbrook. Bring binoculars and dress for the weather. Who has arrived for the winter? Who is still here? Expect to learn some new bird calls! Families welcome.
- **Snoqualmie 101:** September 27, 7 pm Join the Snoqualmie Valley Museum's Cristy Lake to explore the history of Snoqualmie, from the last ice age through the thousands of years of human habitation in this valley. See fascinating photos from the Museum's collection, and learn about the interesting personalities involved. Families welcome.
- **Hike to the Big Cedar:** Sept. 28 9 am Walk through Meadowbrook's woodlands and cross seasonal stream channels to see an old growth cedar tree over 500 years old. Dress for the weather, may be muddy! Heavy rain or wind will cancel. Families welcome, but not suitable for strollers.
- **Prairie Restoration Begins!** October 11, 7 pm Learn about plans and progress for prairie restoration on Meadowbrook and other sites in the valley. Test plots are growing at Three Forks Natural Area, and work will begun on Meadowbrook test sites soon. Ryan Lewis, of the Snoqualmie Tribe's Environmental and Natural Resources department, will discuss results from the past year, and next plans. Families welcome!
- **Oaktoberfest!** October 19, 9–1 Celebrating fall planting season, native plants, oak trees, and Tremendous Trees in the valley! Kids crafts and games, native plant sales, pollinator sales, Washington Native Plant Society booth, Snoqualmie Tribe Ancestral Land Movement display, North Bend Arbor Day planting.



Second-grade classmates enjoy a snack at Meadowbrook before walking back to school .