

Meadowbrook Farm Park Summer Newsletter July 2021

Explore Meadowbrook: Visit the Scout Meadow!

Summer is a wonderful time to sample areas in the park that you haven't visited before. The Scout Meadow—named for mid-century Boy Scout jamboree camp-outs held there—is one of the hidden places in Meadowbrook where you see very little evidence of the 20th century. And it's one of the best places to look for elk, if you've driven past the roadside fields, and don't see any: walk quietly into the Scout Meadow, and you may find them there.

An easy way to visit the Scout Meadow is to park at Snoqualmie Middle School's parking lot—use the visitor parking at the northeast end. Walk along the east edge of the school (as if you were headed for the play fields behind the school). Partway along the school itself, a trail opens on the east side (to your right.) Follow the trail (and the elk tracks) across a short causeway, and you are in the Scout Meadow. Walk through this lovely field, and think about its long history as a maintained prairie, then a productive farm. If you continue on the trail, you can travel on to Centennial Fields Park for a short hike, or continue via the Camas Meadow to the Meadowbrook Interpretive Center building.

Coming Events at Meadowbrook!

The Gigantic Bike Festival will return to Centennial Fields and Meadowbrook Farm Park on August 27 and 28th, with camping, supported Snoqualmie Valley bicycle rides for all rider levels, and big-screen bicycling movies on Friday evening. Welcome back, Bike Festival, after two Covid years! More information and register at www.gigantic.bike



WWRC Annual Dinner

The Washington Wildlife and Recreation Coalition will have their annual celebration meeting at the Meadowbrook Interpretive Center in September this year. The WWRC is the outreach arm of the state's Washington Wildlife and Recreation Fund, a granting agency that (as IAC) contributed \$500,000 to the purchase of Meadowbrook Farm Park in 1995. Representatives of the WWRC will be filming various activities and wildlife this summer as part of the special meeting program, highlighting activities today at one of their grant funded projects. Hike, bike, dog-walk or fly your drone at Meadowbrook this summer, and you may be part of the movie! Welcome to our beautiful park, WWRC, and thank you, again!

Interpretive Center and Field Rentals

Washington is opening up after the months of



Interior of Meadowbrook Farm Interpretive Center building.

Covid restrictions, and so is Meadowbrook Farm Park! The Park's open spaces and trails were popular outdoor get-aways during the Covid months, but now the Interpretive Center and event fields may be reserved for groups of any size. Reserve space for your wedding, party, or family celebration to enjoy the ambiance of this beautiful open space park! Call Si View Parks at 425 831 1900.

Happy Birthday, Baby Elk!

It's time to watch for baby elk in Meadowbrook's fields. After a 245 day average gestation,



Young elk calf, photo courtesy of Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation

new spotted elk calves are born in early to mid June. Calves usually weigh 30–40 pounds at birth, and are up and nursing after about 30 minutes. For the first few days, calves will hide by remaining completely motionless, but soon are strong enough to keep up with their mothers. For a period of time they can gain a pound per day! (We don't mow Meadowbrook's tall grass fields during this period to protect hiding calves!) While mother and calf remain in seclusion for the first week or two, the calves are soon old enough for the pair to rejoin the herd. Watch for frolicking babies, or several napping babies watched closely by a nearby cow! Just don't approach the elk, moms may be especially protective at this time!

The Last Ice Age Molded Meadowbrook's Prairie by Dave Battey

The Washington State Department of Natural Resources internet page (link below) notes: "Over the last several million years, glaciers have repeatedly inundated northern Washington. The last glacial climatic interval was called the Fraser glaciation, which sculpted much of the topography we see today in the Puget Lowland and northern Washington. These glacial periods were interrupted by warmer nonglacial climatic periods."

THE UPPER VALLEY COVERED WITH ICE

Twenty thousand years ago, the last of many ice-ages covered much of the Snoqualmie Valley and Snoqualmie Prairie (Meadowbrook Farm) under about three hundred feet of ice. How do we know this? The answer is in the evidence. Huge non-native rocks and boulders dropped at high elevations as the ice melted. This last monster glacier originally came down the Frazier River in Canada, filled Puget Sound, and pushed its way south as far as the town of Tenino in Thurston county and up the Puget foothills to meet the glaciers advancing down the Cascade Mountain rivers. Seattle, near the center of this ice sheet was covered with about 3,000 feet of ice. We will refer to our 'local' ice covering using its common name of 'Vashon Glacier.' In our Valley, the LGM or Last Glacial Maximum (the highest the Vashon Glacier made it up into our valley) is about where Truck Town is today. The gravel now being mined in the area east of North Bend, piled up in front of the Vashon Glacier, dropped there by the Cascade rivers as they found their way around the upper edge of the great ice dam that filled and blocked their normal river valleys. The Vashon Glacier advanced and retreated multiple times over several thousand years, and in doing so, formed much of the geography of the Upper Snoqualmie Valley and Meadowbrook Prairie as we see it today.

Our Valley is not the normal 'V' shape formed by a river nor is it a 'U' shape formed by a glacier. It is relatively flat between Mount Si and Rattlesnake Mountain, with only the 'Swing Rock' outcropping (now almost all mined away) popping above the prairie. Additionally, North Bend averages 440 feet above sea level and Snoqualmie 427 feet, a difference of only thirteen feet. How was this non-standard 'flat' landscape formed? The Vashon glacier blocked the Middle Fork of the Snoqualmie River, which then, as now, was the primary Valley water source from the Cascades. At the Last Glacial Maximum, the gravel coming down the Middle Fork piled up against the face of the glacier and created a dam. A large lake formed behind this dam and as the ice receded farther, the gravel dam was breached by the Middle Fork, pouring the gravel into our Valley. Multiple times, as the Vashon Glacier advanced and retreated, the lake re-formed and the dam was breached, filling our Valley with more and more aggregate.

The receding Vashon Glacier paused for a while where Snoqualmie Falls is today and built an extensive gravel dam. The river found its way around the gravel dam to the south. When the ice receded further and the river dug a new bed, it found hard rock instead of an erodible riverbed, and the waterfall was created. The gravel dam that pushed the river south, creating the Falls, has been mined for years and the gravel pit is currently operated by the CalPortland aggregate and ready-mix plant.

THE GRAVEL FORMED A HUGE ACQUIFIER

So the 'U' shaped Upper Snoqualmie Valley, carved by the Vashon Glacier was filled with rocks, sand and gravel from Mount Si to Rattlesnake Mountain. Underground water flowing through and around rocks is what we tap with our water wells. The Upper Valley under Meadowbrook Farm and all the way to Truck Town is a huge mostly untapped water reservoir for possible future use.

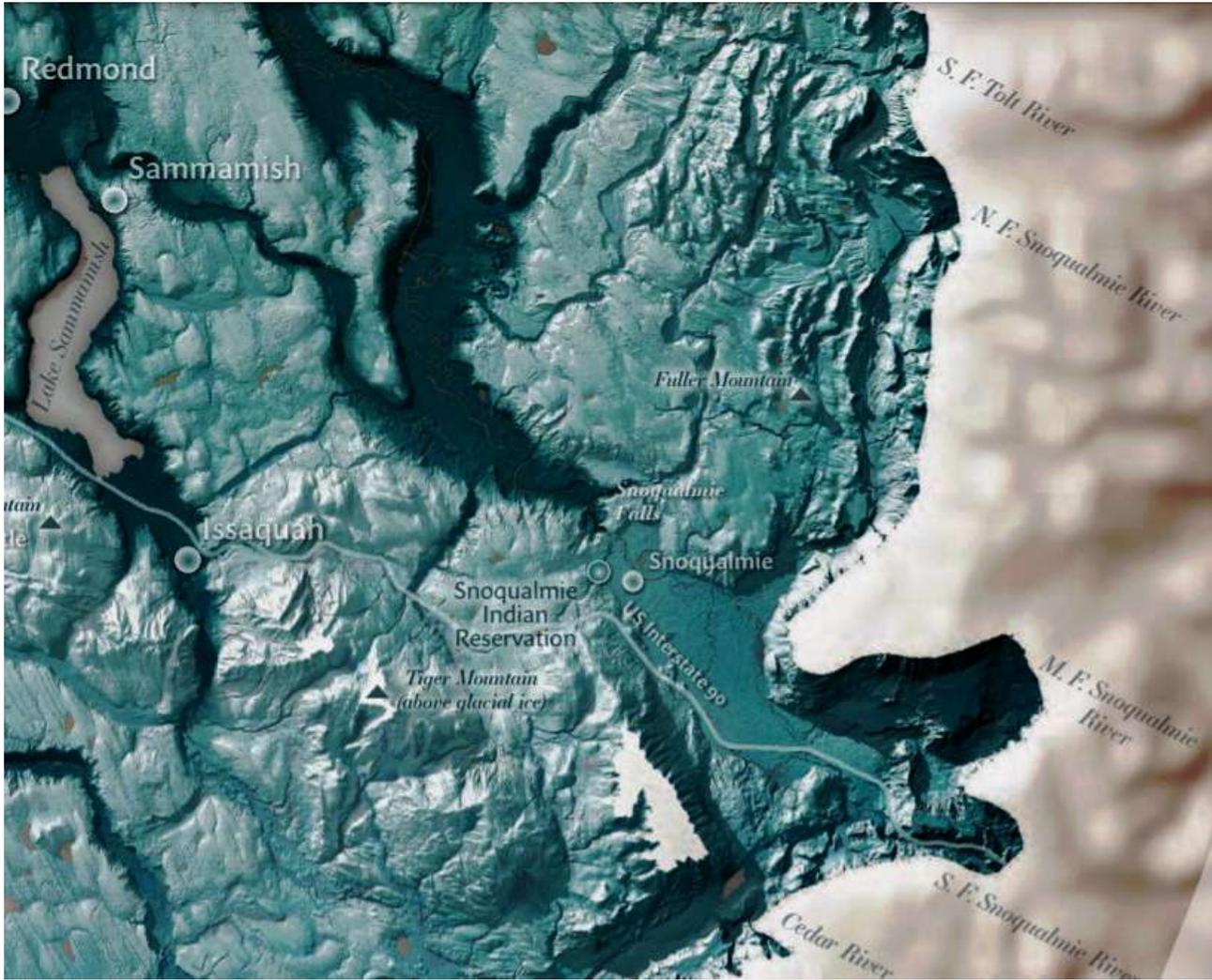
After the Vashon Glacier melted, the three forks and main stream of the Snoqualmie wandered around throughout the flat aggregate base formed by the glacial activity, depositing the rich valley soil deeply appreciated by the Snoqualmie Tribe, Valley pioneers, hop growers, dairy cows and enjoyed by the elk on Meadowbrook Prairie today.

HUMANS BATTLED THE COLD

It was very cold for thousands of years, and, as the ice slowly left Western Washington salmon, a critical food source, could not jump Snoqualmie Falls. Once the most cataclysmic glacial topography changes stabilized and soil stratigraphy no longer was routinely scoured (or in some cases, buried under 300 feet of gravel backfill), the Snoqualmie People are present within the archaeological record. First seasonally and then full-time, the Snoqualmie People made use of the Upper Valley for agriculture and hunting. They burned the prairie to promote growth of primary food crops such as bracken fern, camas, 'tiger' lilies and the native wild blackberry

(*Rubus ursinus*), thus keeping much of the valley relatively free of large trees and creating a forest 'edge' where animals could feel safe in the forest but venture out into the prairie to graze. A great place to hunt. The tribes from Eastern and Western Washington knew of each other because of the Columbia River Gorge, so as the ice receded, attempts were made from both sides of the Cascades to create passes over the mountains and over time, seasonal trade sprung up between them with the Upper Snoqualmie Valley being a primary meeting place.

David Stewart Battey



The Blue Area is the extent (Last Glacial Maximum) of the Vashon Glacier in the Snoqualmie Valley. N.F, M.F. and S.F. refer to the North, Middle and South Forks of the Snoqualmie River. Many thanks to Cristy Lake at the **Snoqualmie Valley Historical Society** for finding this map and DNR reference.

<https://www.dnr.wa.gov/programs-and-services/geology/glaciers#the-cordilleran-ice-sheet.2>



Tim Noonan mows with the smaller John Deere tractor in happier days.

Tractor Fire and Loss

The Snoqualmie Tribe originally kept the Snoqualmie Prairie open by periodic burning. Later, intensive farming eliminated invasive growth. Today, with the ancient prairie core as public open space, tractor mowing is one of the essential tools to maintain Meadowbrook Farm Park's open fields and meadows for public use.

Unfortunately, an engine fire destroyed the smaller of Meadowbrook's two older tractors on June 24. Due to quick thinking and action by driver Kayla Noonan and site manager Tim Noonan, no one was hurt, but the tractor is essentially a total loss, despite a response by Eastside Fire and Rescue. The 1998 tractor was funded partially by a King County 4-Culture grant in 2018, and has been "a workhorse for us" according to Tim Noonan. Equipped with a loader, and low and nimble enough to mow field edges under trees, the 5310 John Deere tractor has helped plow snow, mow fields, and move equipment such as picnic tables. With both maintenance and rental preparation responsibilities, and limited funds, the Meadowbrook Farm Preservation Association has utilized two older tractors to ensure at least one is always in working order. Now a replacement tractor is needed.

The lack of rental income during the Covid period—about 60% of Meadowbrook Farm Park's operating budget-- makes funding a sound used tractor problematic. Donations are very welcome! If you know of a good used mid-sized tractor available-- PTO HP at least 55-- or would like to help, please contact the MFPA at info@meadowbrookfarmpreserve.org

Whitaker Foundation Grant!

The Meadowbrook Farm Preservation Association recently received a \$5,000



Long-time Snoqualmie valley physician Dr. John Whitaker and his wife Mary

Whitaker supported many community causes.

grant from Snoqualmie's Whitaker Foundation, towards maintenance and operations of the public open space park!

The Whitaker Foundation was established by the Whitaker family in memory of Dr. John and Mary Whitaker, to continue the Whitaker legacy of support for educational and community causes. Whitaker Park in the Snoqualmie Ridge neighborhood also commemorates the long valley career of Dr. Whitaker, and the family's many public contributions. Thank you, Whitaker Foundation!

Snoqualmie Valley Beekeepers Grant!

The Snoqualmie Valley Beekeepers also recently donated \$500 to the MFPA. The Beekeepers maintain the apiary at Meadowbrook Farm Park, offer public beekeeping classes, and hold monthly informational meetings about beekeeping. Contact them at snovalleybees.org

These generous grants are especially appreciated by the Meadowbrook Farm Preservation Association at this time, as Covid isolation restrictions have curtailed facility rentals, and thus greatly impacted the park's operating budget. Thank you, Whitaker family! Thank you, Snoqualmie Valley Beekeepers!



Meadowbrook Farm Preservation Association

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

Tim Noonan (site manager)
Mary Norton (president)
Kelly Heintz (King County)
Ryan Goodman (Si View Parks)
Adam Osbekoff (Snoqualmie Tribe)

Amy Brockhaus (Mountains to Sound Greenway)
Jason Rogers (City of Snoqualmie)
Mike McCarty (City of North Bend) (secretary)
Bill Whitaker (Snoqualmie Citizen)

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