



*Hikers enjoy Mount Si views while walking across a Meadowbrook open field heading to the Camas Meadow.*

## **Meadowbrook Farm Park**

### **Summer Newsletter June 2022**

It's been a rainy cool spring, but the salmon berries are ripening, the vultures are back, and it's time to watch for elk calves. What better way to enjoy a Snoqualmie Valley summer, than to visit Meadowbrook Farm's historic open space? As you enjoy a trail, watch a hunting hawk, or glimpse an elusive coyote or elk, remember that this unique public open space was once part of the vast Snoqualmie Prairie, 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!

## **It's Baby Animal Season!**

It's time to watch for baby elk in Meadowbrook's fields. After a 245 day average gestation, 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. (We don't mow Meadowbrook's



tall grass fields during this period to protect hiding calves!) For a period of time calves can gain a pound per day! 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!

When watching wildlife, remember:

- 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.

## **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. 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.

## New Eagle Scout Projects Benefit Meadowbrook Farm Park!

The work of Boy and Girl Scouts have made many enhancements to Meadowbrook Farm Park over recent years. Recently, two very different Eagle Scout projects have benefited Meadowbrook. Thank you, all Scouts, for the work you have done for Meadowbrook!

**Ryan Sproge**, a junior at Mt Si High School, and member of Troop 466, chose an interesting wildlife issue for his project. Gardiner Creek flows across the east end of Meadowbrook Farm, and at one point, separates the Youth Activity Center (where his Troop is based) from Meadowbrook. Beaver activity building dams in the creek has backed up the creek water in recent years and has raised the water table for both properties. Ryan built and installed a “beaver deceiver” at the large beaver dam, helping to artificially lower the water level, without harm to the beavers.



*Beavers are semi-aquatic large rodents who live on tree bark, twigs, and aquatic plants. They can stay underwater for 15 minutes, typically live 10--12 years, and can raise 1-4 kits per year.*



*This large beaver dam across Gardiner Creek on Meadowbrook helped raise the water table at both Meadowbrook and the Youth Activity Center. D. Battey photo*

With the help of his advisor, Doug McClland, and in consultation with Beavers Northwest, a non-profit organization helping with beaver issues, Ryan directed troop members and families in the installation. Beavers are motivated to dam water flows by both the sound of rushing water, and feeling the current in moving water. The beaver deceiver works by diverting some of the water past the dam via a pipe, or by notching the dam to lower it, while isolating the sound and water flow from the beaver by fencing. The beaver is kept far enough way from the extra flow that he doesn't feel the need to dam the new flow.

Ryan's project involved a permit from the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. Cattle fencing panels in locations specified by beaver behavior research were installed in two work days over a two week period, and will be checked monthly for beaver activity and any debris accumulation. The water table adjacent to Gardiner Creek in that area will be observed.

Upon graduation, Ryan plans to attend the aeronautics and aviation program at University of Dakota, in Grand Forks, North Dakota, with the goal of becoming a commercial airline pilot. Thank you, Ryan!

**Henry Spiekermann** will be a high school senior, and member of Troop 575. He chose an Eagle project planned to enhance the visitor experience at Meadowbrook Farm Park, after noticing the number of people often gathering to observe elk activity. Henry planned and directed troop members and parents to build six new picnic tables, including two ADA-accessible tables, to be placed at popular Meadowbrook elk-viewing pull-out locations on Boalch Avenue in North Bend and Park Street in Snoqualmie.



*Henry (kneeling) demonstrates assembling table components to other Scouts in the shop at home.*



*Henry Spiekermann (in orange shirt) directs table assembly on-site at Meadowbrook.*

Matching the design of other Meadowbrook heavy-duty picnic tables, Henry utilized indoor space at home to cut and create table parts using ground-contact treated wood from Chinook Lumber in North Bend. (Thank you for the Eagle Scout discount, Chinook Lumber!) On-site at Meadowbrook, the table components were assembled under the watchful eyes of some of the elk.

Placed close to the paved trail and at road pull-outs, several of the tables were in use by families the very next day. Thank you, Henry!



*Scouts and crew take advantage of a partially finished table for an elk-watching break .*

After graduation, Henry Spiekermann plans to attend electrical lineman school, and to leverage work as a lineman to then fund welding school.

## Prairie Loop Trail Update

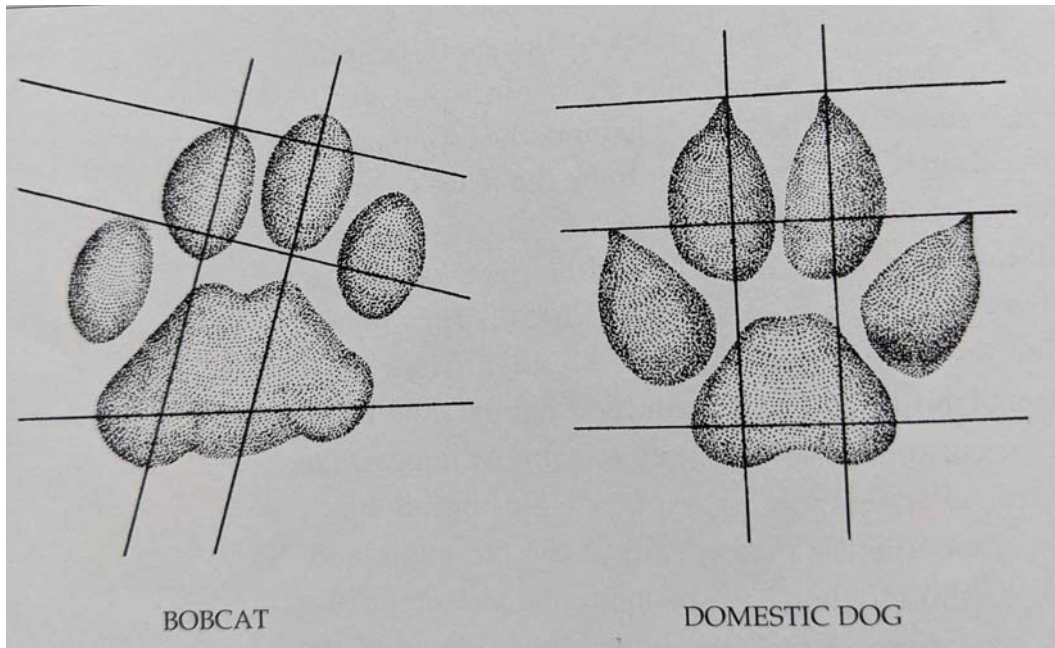
The Cities of North Bend and Snoqualmie, the Si View Metropolitan Park District, and the Meadowbrook Farm Preservation Association (MFPA) are working jointly together with the Snoqualmie Tribe to plan for the future Prairie Loop Trail at Meadowbrook Farm Park. The loop trail will connect from the Meadowbrook Farm Interpretive Center north through the fields, forests, and wetland areas of Meadowbrook Farm to connect to Centennial Fields Park, with a spur trail connecting to Snoqualmie Middle School. With its link to the existing paved trail paralleling Park Street in Snoqualmie and Boalch Avenue in North Bend, the trail will form an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessible 2.6 mile loop around Meadowbrook Farm. The trail will provide access through some of the more remote portions of Meadowbrook Farm, where one can experience a sense of the original Snoqualmie Prairie that has existed at this location for thousands of years, thanks to the stewardship of the Snoqualmie Tribe. The project will also provide for management of noxious weeds including reed canary grass, and the restoration of native plant species which have been historically present in the prairie and its wetlands. Interpretive signs will help to tell the story of the prairie, which will be developed in consultation with the Snoqualmie Tribe. The trail will provide excellent opportunities for walking, jogging, bird and elk watching, and simply learning about and connecting with the rich history and experience of this special place.

The City of North Bend has secured a \$500,000 Parks Capital Grant from King County for the project, and the parties are jointly applying for a 2022 Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program grant to fund the remainder of the project. We look forward to further planning ahead for this great trail proposal, and look forward to the day that this loop trail will be open to the public. For more information on the project, contact North Bend Senior Planner Mike McCarty at (425) 888-7649 or [mmccarty@northbendwa.gov](mailto:mmccarty@northbendwa.gov).

## Who Walked Here?

One of the fun things about a walk at Meadowbrook is looking at tracks. Most valley residents can now recognize elk tracks . . .but was that a bobcat or a coyote? Was that a cougar, or someone's really big dog?

There are some simple differences to look for that can help distinguish members of the canine and feline families by their tracks. Of course, not every track will show every characteristic, but by examining a number of prints, you can often make an informed judgment.



*From "Tracking and the Art of Seeing" by Paul Rezendes*

- Felines have retractable claws: their claw marks will not show, but canine claws usually do.
- Feline tracks tend to be generally round, rather than oval like a dog; coyotes are even more oval.
- Feline toe pads generally look smaller in comparison to the main pad, than canine toe pads.
- Feline main pads usually show a "double lobed" forward edge, while canines do not.
- The curved space between feline main pads and toe pads creates an "arc" or ridge between main and toe pads. Canines tend to have a raised pyramidal area of mud or dirt in that tighter space.
- Canine tracks tend to be symmetrical, with the toe pads pointing in the same direction as the main pad. Feline toe pads tend to point in a slightly different direction than the main pad, and the inside and outside toe pads may be offset, one ahead of the other, making the feline track look somewhat asymmetrical.

Enjoy looking at tracks at Meadowbrook, and thinking about the animals who live there!

*Hops from Meadowbrook to Monte Vista to Museum and Back to Meadowbrook*

## **Hops Hop back to Meadowbrook Farm Park**

In 2005, searching for a newsletter worthy article, Snoqualmie Valley Historical Society Museum Director, Dale Sherman and I discussed the journey of hops from Meadowbrook to my farm, then the Museum and then back to Meadowbrook. I have modified Dale's story below:

The Hop Growers Association was incorporated in 1882 by Richard Jeffs of White River, Captain George W. Gove, and D.K. Baxter. They purchased land from the Valley's first permanent European-American settler, Jeremiah Borst

and began what quickly expanded into a 1200 acre operation, with about 900 acres in hops and billed as the "Largest Hop Ranch in the World." The growing of hops was extremely profitable until over-production and a "hop louse" (aphid) crippled the business and by 1904, the giant hop farm was turned in to a dairy operation by new owner, Arthur W. Pratt and his farm manager, Angus J. Mofatt – repurposing the thousands of cedar hop poles as cattle fencing.



*Hops (*Humulus lupulus*) are used to flavor beer and other drinks, and in herbal medicines.*



*Hop-picking time in Hop Ranch days (late 1880's) drew seasonal workers, often Native Americans, from eastern Washington and up the Northwest coast. Workers were paid in silver dollars. Notice tall split cedar hop poles, full hop baskets, and whole families working together.*



*Dave Olson, past Meadowbrook board member, plants hops at the Interpretive Center.*



*Sam Metzler, past Meadowbrook board member, and Kathy Battey harvest hop flowers.*



*Home-brewed beer from Meadowbrook hops.*

Today, 460 acres of the original hop ranch have been saved and are held in public ownership, preserving some of the natural open beauty the Snoqualmie's, and later European settlers, found so inviting. The Snoqualmie Valley Historical Museum has many artifacts from the original ranch, including photographs, tokens, and postcards.

But what became of all those hops?

Well, thanks to Museum Board member Dave Battey, and with the blessing and help of Doris Vinnedge, some of the original hop vines were saved and are now back in the same soil from which they began their journey back in 1882. In 1993, Dave was mowing Meadowbrook Farm for the Snoqualmie Valley Land Company, the owners of the property. Dave asked a few of the owners if he could transplant some of the hops that were scattered about and still alive at the time. His idea was to preserve the original hops off site, as the Land Company had portions of the property for sale and development would likely wipe out any vestiges of the vines. The Board of Directors of the Land Company never took up Dave's suggestion, but, not to be thwarted in his quest to preserve an important piece of Valley history, Dave contacted Doris Vinnedge, one of the five principals of the Land Company, and mother of Museum board member Gardiner Vinnedge. Doris was excited to help!

In Dave's words "Doris called me, and we set up a date and time to go out on the farm and dig some hop roots. As it turned out, we picked about the wettest day of the year. I picked up Doris right in front of her house in my four-wheel drive truck and we were both dressed in rain slickers. We drove out on the Dike Road - which is almost to the Golf Course, on the Golf Course side of Boalch, and I headed for the main drainage ditch that is the property line



between the Golf Course and Meadowbrook. I knew there were some strong plants there, growing up maple trees along the border. Doris didn't get out of the truck - her reason for being there was purely to make the "plant heist" legal. Dave planted the roots at his farm, and a year later they were transferred to the Museum where they were planted in large planters made of railroad ties, built in front of the Museum Farm Shed. They quickly covered the full front of the Farm Shed.



*Hop flowers not yet ready for harvest. Hop-picking time is a narrow window between ripeness and fall rain. There were several hop drying sheds in the upper valley where hops were dried after picking, but the hop-drying shed in Fall City is the last remaining drying shed for hops from the days of the Hop Ranch.*

With Meadowbrook Farm now preserved public land as of December of 1996, the Museum Board began to discuss moving the vines back to their original soil. Accordingly, during the first week of April, Dave and several friends of Meadowbrook, once again took up shovels and transplanted the progeny of the vines he and Doris Vinnedge saved back in 1993. The original plantings were just outside the back door of the Meadowbrook Interpretive Center, but soon, the sturdy poles set as a symbolic 'salmon drying' area just outside the Interpretive Center were commandeered as hop poles, and quickly enough of a crop was available for some home brewing of Meadowbrook beer by Meadowbrook Board Member Dave Olson.

So the hops that Doris Vinnedge helped preserve, came back home to Meadowbrook, where they climb the poles and set their hop 'cones' every year



**David Stewart Battey**

Dave Battey is a Meadowbrook Farm board member and valley historian.



## Interpretive Center and Field Rentals

Meadowbrook Farm Park is a special place, and just right for your special event. The historic land's open spaces and trails were popular outdoor get-aways during the Covid months, but 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.

## Classes for Fall 2022

September 15, Thursday, 7 pm. Meadowbrook Farm Interpretive Center. Free. **Our Year with Birds!** When a wildlife biologist and his wife, a life-long birder, decide to devote a year to the best of birdwatching, it's an adventure of seasonal travel far away from the usual tourist destinations. Harold Erland will show some of the highlights of his and Carol's carefully planned year of birding, including migration routes and flyways. Families welcome!

September 23, Friday, 7 pm. Meadowbrook Interpretive Center. Free. **North Bend 101** Join the Snoqualmie Valley Museum's director Cristy Lake for an informative, illustrated presentation about North Bend's interesting and colorful history. Enjoy historic photos and information from the Museum collection. Families welcome!

September 24, Saturday, 9 am. Meadowbrook Farm Interpretive Center. Free. **Hike to the Big Cedar!** Walk through Meadowbrook's woods and across seasonal stream channels to visit a tree 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 possible wet areas. Heavy rain will cancel. Families welcome; hike is about 1.75 miles and not suitable for strollers. Mary Norton

October 14, Friday, 7 pm. Meadowbrook Interpretive Center. Free. **Snoqualmie 101** Snoqualmie Valley Museum director Cristy Lake will relate Snoqualmie's fascinating story, including the ice age which sculpted the valley, thousands of years of prairie homeland maintained by the Snoqualmie Tribe, and finally, pioneer times. Enjoy many historic photos from the Museum collection. Families welcome!



### Meadowbrook Farm Preservation Association

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

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

Tim Noonan (vice president)  
Jason Rogers (City of Snoqualmie)  
Mike McCarty (City of North Bend) (secty)  
Adam Osbekoff (Snoqualmie Tribe)

Caroline Villanova (Mountains to Sound Greenway)  
Dave Battey (SVHS)  
Ron Crouch (North Bend Citizen)

John House (treasurer)  
Ryan Goodman (Si View Parks)