

Ellen Davis Trail

by Steve Jones

My wife and I hiked the Ellen Davis Trail today and I knew a little about her because she was an early member of the Chinook Trail Association. My wife asked "Who was Ellen Davis?" The following information was written by one of the Chinook Trail Association founders, Don Cannard.

Ellen and her husband Charles settled in Vancouver in the 1940's. A charter member of the over50-year-old Minnehaha Garden Club, Ellen held many offices and never missed a meeting unless out of town. She was also a charter member of the 50-year-old Minnehaha Social Club, an organization with the purpose of generally spreading good cheer and fostering camaraderie among its community, which it does to this day. Her flower arrangements and displays gathered from her own backyard were well known in all her circles and she participated in many district shows and meetings.

As a member of the Ptarmigans, a Vancouver based outdoor club, Ellen went on many of the outings. She rafted, canoed, backpacked and hiked through many of the noted places of the Northwest. She continued these outings even as she entered her 90's, and similarly enjoyed the Parks and Recreation Department's "Wildemess Wanderers" program outings. Ellen was also an active member of the Vancouver Audubon Society. Ellen enjoyed both the overnight birding trips as well as the day trips to local places, appreciating the available outdoor sites and discoveries. She did not let her advancing age preclude her attendance at any of the organizations in which

she participated.

As a member of the CTA, Ellen helped construct the trails on Silver Star and worked on other trails, most notably the one that would bear her name – The Ellen Davis Trail. This trail goes from Minnehaha and St. James streets to I-5.

Although Ellen was not the type whose name one finds on a list of who's who, those she touched in her quiet and effective ways regarded her to be a "Woman of Achievement." She made an impact on all who knew her and marveled at her spryness, alertness and interest in the world around her. Ellen passed away in 1999 at the age of 95.

Silver Star Snowshoe

by Steve Jones

Ed Blodgett and I took advantage of wonderful day Tuesday February 9th and snowshoed from above the quarry on the DNR 1180 Road up an old Jeep trail to the Chinook Trail. This route is fairly safe from avalanches and avoids driving to the FR 4109 trailhead.

The conditions were just below freezing on the way up and the rime ice as thick on tree branches. On the way to the summit we saw a coyote looking for a meal. We didn't see any people

on the way up and just two on the way down. One man was hoping to parasail off the summit and land at the quarry.

Ed was telling me about the old trail to Ft. Simcoe that went over the saddle between Silver Star and the false summit, then continued along the ridge toward Little Baldy. Ed has done quite a bit of exporting around Little Baldy and there are some old trails in that area.

The snow depth varied from about 4 inches where we parked to about 6 feet near the summit of Silver Star.

The weather warmed as we returned and we passed beneath trees dripping from melting snow. This trip offers great scenery as long as you don't mind the route being uphill almost the entire way. We snowshoed about 5 1/4 miles and gained about 1,700 feet.

Eagle Creek Trail Closure Work

by Steve Jones

I worked on the CLOSED Eagle Creek Trail Friday February 6th. The road to the parking lot is barricaded and the trail is barricaded in two places.

High winds and rain cause work parties to be canceled for safety but it was a drizzly day so we set off to clear more mud, rocks, and debris. Every weather system seems to bring down things into the trail and Friday was no exception. More mud near the trailhead and small rocks in the trail. I was in a group of four people and we worked in two places about 3 miles from the trailhead. I worked all day clearing mud and rock off the trail and digging out this stump so another trail crew and chainsaw this log and winch the stump out of the trail. I was so tired after moving mud and rock that I went to bed at 8 pm.

The trail is looking better and will remain closed until a serious washout of the trail can be repaired. Nearly all of the mud has been cleaned off the first mile of trail and several deadfalls remain including this very large tree that I worked around. No estimate has been given for when the Eagle Creek Trail will reopen.

It is a beautiful trail even after the fire and I look forward to it reopening sometime this year.

Eagle Creek Trail Closure

by Steve Jones

Our recent rains have created multiple landslides in area burned by recent forest fires. This affects the Oregon side of

the Chinook Trail. Also on the Oregon portion of the Chinook Trail the September windstorm blew down over 40 trees across the upper Eagle Creek trail in the Mark O Hatfield Wilderness. The trees along this section of the trail are large second-growth trees and it will be sometime this spring before they are cleared with cross-cut saws.

This week I went on two work parties on the CLOSED Eagle Creek Trail clearing mud, sticks, and rocks covering many sections of the first mile of trail. There are also two sections where the trail slid away. This smaller washout, which is near the trailhead is nearly repaired but the larger section further along the trail has not been worked on yet.

The trail may remain closed for two or three more months as repairs are completed and logs cut out of the trail along the creek. Of course if we have another four to six inches of rain in a single storm there will be more slides and trees that will come down onto the trail and cause the trail to be closed even longer. The narrowness of this trail and its popularity make it very difficult to work on this trail when it is open.

Bluff Mountain Trail

by Steve Jones

Last Saturday on 1/16/21 Rod Hooker from Washington Trails Association and myself hiked on the Bluff Mountain Trail. The Forest Road 41 is in terrible shape and regular passenger cars will bottom out in the plethora of potholes on the way to the Bluff Mountain Trailhead. There was no snow on the road until

almost to the trailhead where there were shallow ruts in the snow.

This trailhead is lightly used due to the horrible road conditions. The parking lot has a couple of places where pallets have been burned for a campfire and the nails left in the parking lot. We had a nice day for the hike and the view from the parking lot is stunning.

The first part of the trail is an old Forest Service Road which was once blocked off but people have moved the boulders out of the road and are again driving down the old road. The ruts are quite deep for the first mile but then the ground gets very rocky and the trail looks like an old gravel road. Even in the first mile there are some spectacular ridgeline views of Mt. Hood, Mt. Adams, and Mt. St. Helens. Mt Jefferson can be seen in the distance and we spotted Saddle Mountain 45 miles to the west.

After about 2.25 miles the trail leaves the old road to the right. You have to know where to look for the trail and it looks like a little gully. Missing this turnoff causes you to go over the top of the next hill and scramble through the brush back down to the trail.

The trail is getting pretty brushy and is Washington Trails Association and the Chinook Trail Association are tentatively planning to brush this trail this summer.

The Chinook Trail Association has also been in contact with the Forest Service about vehicles again using this old forest road.

Bells Mountain Weekday Trail Closure

Update 2/6/2021 – Logging has finished in this area of the trail. There is still some debris but the trail is now open all days.

Logging operations in the Yacolt Burn State Forest are causing weekday closures on the Bells Mountain Trail about 5 miles north of Cold Creek Day Use Area through March 31st, 2021.