

The Chinook Trail Association is Still on the Job

Commentary by Steve Klump

Photos by Steve Jones

May 25, 2020

I begin these thoughts on Memorial Day 2020. As many of us know, Memorial Day honors those who have lost their lives in the military service of our country. This day of remembering dates back to the close of the American Civil War.

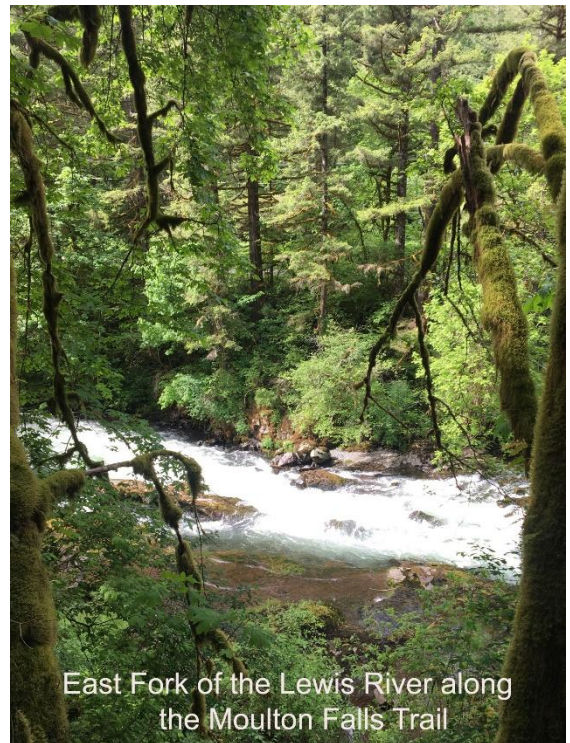
I've spent the morning reflecting on what the past means for us. I listened as some old friends from 50 years ago sang songs celebrating the goodness of the American experiment. I spent some time looking at pictures from the 1st decade of my mother's life (she was born in 1912). Those pictures reminded me how much family resemblances come down through the generations. That is also a reminder that we get much of our character and values from the people who reared us into adulthood.

Oh, and two more things. I spent time on Facebook reading about a friend of mine who spends much of her time cleaning trash out of the forests near Packwood, Washington. I also spent some time reading the "Fieldguide" from the Columbia Land Trust. Their articles about restoring and stewarding our forests and rivers and "wild lands" tell of an amazing work in our region – some of which impacts the ecosystem that the Chinook Trail System shares.

With the current pandemic and its social requirements, the Chinook Trail Association is unable to work on maintaining trails the way we would like to. And we did postpone our Annual Gathering and Meeting which was scheduled for March 15.

Still, it's worth remembering that the Chinook Trail System hasn't gone anywhere. Much is still accessible. That includes the urban trails of Clark County and the Tri-Met region in Oregon.

It includes backcountry trails that run 100 miles to the east end of the Gorge National Scenic Area. It includes trails near the Columbia River and trails in the hills which look down on our "Gorge-ous River".



East Fork of the Lewis River along the Moulton Falls Trail

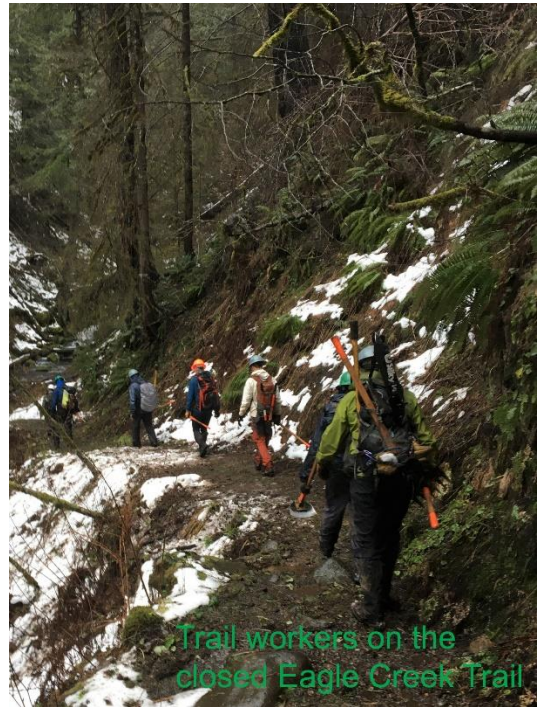


Cedar Creek Falls at
Cold Creek dayuse area

The twin episodes of the pandemic and the Eagle Creek Fire has some of our trails shut down, so check local conditions if you get the urge to explore. Recently our CTA President Steve Jones has been out doing just that; exploring portions of the Chinook Trail System in the vicinity of the Yacolt Burn. He has been posting pictures on our Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook accounts.

Last year Steve Jones joined Pacific Crest Trail Association crews working on the Eagle Creek Trail. Because of the fire, many backcountry trails and trailheads will remain closed for the next few years, which means that hiking southern (i.e. Oregon) sections of the Chinook Trail will not be possible. (The Chinook Trail uses portions of the Eagle Creek Trail as it passes through the Oregon backcountry).

The Chinook Trail Association is looking forward to the time when we can safely resume group meetings and work parties. Be safe, have fun, and get some trail work done.



Trail workers on the
closed Eagle Creek Trail