



Friends of Tubbs Hill NEWSLETTER

Tubbs Hill Foundation, S.221 5th St., Coeur d'Alene 83814 FALL 2000 - Vol. 1

Crowd joins hands around Tubbs Hill

By Mitch Driller

The Tubbs Hill Foundation needs your help. A once-in-a-lifetime fundraiser will be held on Sept. 23. The goal is to raise \$20,000 for trail improvements and the preservation of Tubbs Hill.

Friends of Tubbs Hill, as many as 2,600 people, will form a human chain hand in hand around the two miles of perimeter trail.

This event will enable the foundation to fund future projects. Friends will be able to help in several ways during the event; you too can help with the purchase of a t-shirt for \$10. With the donation of \$25 you will be on the foundation's mailing list, receiving a newsletter and any important updates or issues involving Tubbs Hill. For a \$100 donation you can have your name or that of a loved one placed on one of the boulders in the rock garden. An aerial photo will be taken of the human chain, and photos will be available for purchase.

Tubbs Hill Foundation is a 501c3 Corp., which makes any donations to the foundation tax deductible. The foundation is offering several programs designed to help anyone become a Friend of Tubbs Hill. For information write: Tubbs Hill Foundation, S. 221 5th St., Coeur d'Alene, 83814, or phone 769-2252.

In 1995 a rock garden was started at the Third Street entrance to Tubbs

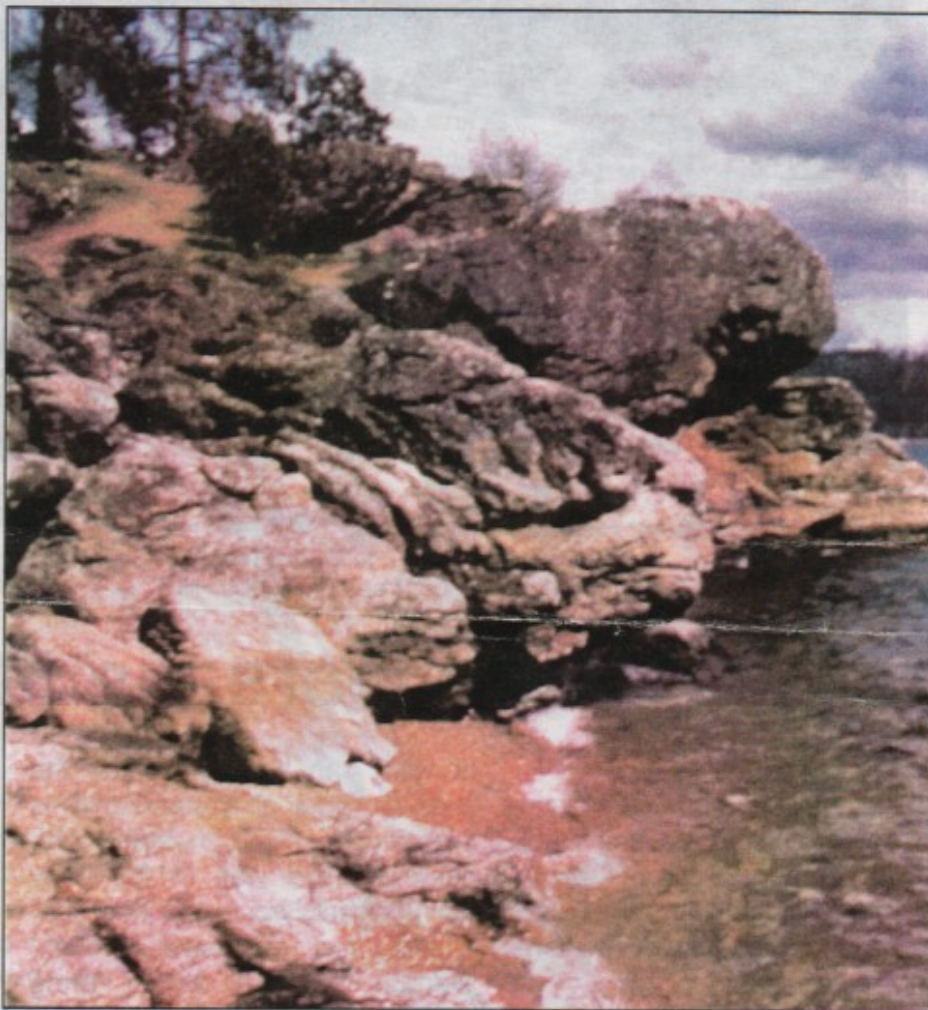


Photo by Joel Riner

A variety of beaches between rock outcroppings gives users of Tubbs Hill the advantages of having private beaches even during busiest weekends. The rocks also serve as diving platforms.

Hill. The garden began with one boulder, and over the past few years the rock garden has grown, reflecting the support for the hill from its friends.

A donation of \$100 will allow your name to join others that want to preserve Tubbs Hill for generations to come.

With the money raised from the Rock Garden and other donations, the foundation has funded several projects. The first project was to work on the Third

Street entrance trailhead. Spending \$12,000 on this project, the foundation laid a trail making it easier to access the Tubbs Hill's trail system. The next project was to develop and complete the hill's East Side Park. With the cost of \$45,000, this much-needed park has made restrooms and water available to hikers and day users while assuring the area would never be threatened by development again.



The Ice Storm of '96 brought down 1,200 trees on Tubbs Hill.

Cooperation clears ice storm debris

By Bob Eagan

It looked like a bad Fox TV special, "Mother Nature Gone Bad." The November '96 ice storm had left Tubbs Hill looking more like a war zone than a pristine woodland park.

Even though December had brought heavy snows, limbs and bows were visible everywhere. On the hardest-hit north and west sides of the park, every view was filled with down, broken and leaning trees. The main trail had become an obstacle course with 80-foot trees jackstrawed and 5-foot root balls torn from the sides left foxhole-size craters. One draw had almost 75 percent of the Douglas fir on the ground.

Anyone could see something had to be done.

What followed was an example

of what can be done when the symbolic soul of a community is threatened. Time became the enemy in this war. In the early spring insects would find ideal conditions for explosive growth. Warmer weather would bring increased use by the public and safety concerns. The spring thaw would send heavy logging equipment back into commercial production elsewhere. If left until summer, fire would become a real danger.

In late December members of the Tubbs Hill Foundation met with city parks officials and local experts in forest management to see what could be done. Within weeks a plan for Wescor to helicopter log had public hearings, various government agency's review and the city council's

approval.

An army of volunteers and city parks department personnel combed the entire park, marking every tree that was to be removed. In March 1,200 trees were removed and 3.7 million pounds of timber and debris were flown off Tubbs Hill onto the lower Third Street parking lot. About 164,000 board feet of timber was trucked to the IFI mill. The rest was ground into "hog fuel" and trucked to a steam plant at the University of Idaho. Volunteers gathered much of the remaining debris on the hill, and it was either chipped up and scattered or piled and burned.

So great was the cooperative effort of this community that today, a mere four years later, the scars of Ice Storm '96 have to be searched for to be seen.

East Side Park new for 2000

By Doug Eastwood

The idea to create a "green pocket" on the east side of Tubbs Hill surfaced around 1989 when the Coeur d'Alene Water Department was preparing to relocate its shop buildings from the east side of Tubbs Hill and to move to Ramsey Road. The move by the water department was completed in 1993. The water department owned the land and the old shop buildings that were left vacant when moved to Ramsey Road.

The City of Coeur d'Alene had purchased the Coeur d'Alene Water Department, its buildings and the land that the buildings sat on in 1974. Prior to that, the water department was known as the Idaho Water Co., which in 1905 constructed the concrete tank that sits on Tubbs Hill just above the new park area. Idaho Water also built a steel tank in the same vicinity as the concrete tank in 1949 and the screen well at the south end of the new park in 1930.

In addition to the water tanks, screen well and shops, Idaho Water owned a single-family home that housed the water superintendent and his family. Adjacent to the house was an old fish hatchery that closed many years ago and the hatchery building was converted to a storage garage. Several large underground water supply lines criss-cross the new park and range in size from 12 inches to 20 inches in diameter.

When the water department finalized its plans to relocate, the parks department saw an opportunity to have the

70x700-foot parcel of land dedicated to parkland. This was done in 1994, and the old shop buildings and the storage garage were removed from the site. The house remained and was leased out until 1999. It was removed in the summer of 1999, creating a nice open area and view of the lake. The screen well remains on the site and is being reviewed for improvements that will preserve the history of the structure.

Conceptual plans for the park development were approved, and through the combined efforts of the parks department and the Tubbs Hill Foundation, funds were raised to create a green pocket on the east side of Tubbs Hill.

Construction of the park began in the spring of 2000 and was completed in July. East Tubbs Hill Park provides easier and better access on and off the hill, open space for picnicking, off-street parking, a restroom and drinking fountain.



Friends of Tubbs Hill Newsletter

This newsletter is planned to be published periodically to keep readers informed of news affecting Tubbs Hill and give historical accounts and photos. Articles are written by members of the Tubbs Hill Foundation, and the newsletters are produced by journalism students of North Idaho College. Anyone with ideas for articles and photos of interest may contact Nils Rosdahl at NIC. Phone (208) 769-3228 or email nrosdahl@nic.edu.



The controlled burn on Tubbs Hill eliminated shrub fuels and remained within its prescribed 50-acre limit.

Controlled burn avoids catastrophe

By Richard Barrett

Fire on Tubbs Hill would be a disaster, especially in a summer of record dry conditions and terrible fires across the West. However, on March 27, a 50-acre controlled burn was conducted on Tubbs Hill to help avoid the potential disaster of a small fire exploding.

The project was a training exercise conducted by Mike Denny of the Department of Lands and Tom Paulson of the Forest Service in cooperation with Rich Kirsch, assistant chief of the Coeur d'Alene Fire Department, Karen Haskew, urban forester for Coeur d'Alene Parks Department, Kootenai Country Fire Protection District and the Eastside Fire District and their crews totalling 35 people.

Although the burn had been considered for four years, "It took us until this year to finally bring it all together," Denny said.

Although the primary purpose was to lessen the effect of catastrophic fire by reducing the available ground and ladder fuel, other objectives included reducing the number of encroached

shade-tolerant young trees (primarily Douglas fir) and returning nutrients to the soil.

Haskew said that in a natural state, fire would occur with some regularity and would eliminate some of the crowding and overstocking.

Kirsch said that the burning, started around 10 a.m. and completed by 3 a.m., achieved a mosaic burn pattern covering 38 percent of the designated area.

"It was kind of neat. When I walked the area about 30 days later," he said, "there were wildflowers blooming in the middle of a blackened patch."

Fireboats from Kootenai and Eastside Fire Districts worked the shoreline to maintain a 75-foot setback and protect the lake. Also a fire tender truck from Eastside was used. No fire escaped the planned burn area.

According to Denny, a 4-foot flame was essential to lessen the effect of catastrophic fire by the fir seedlings and ladder fuels without harming the mature pines, which are naturally more resistant to fire. Denny said computers are used to calculate the

intensity of the burn, based primarily on moisture content of the fuels and that planners use these calculations to "prescribe" the proper burn conditions.

"We were about as far into the season as we could have been. We wanted to have a really cool burn that would heal quickly. A hotter fire would have destroyed the (forest floor) mat and prevented regrowth."

Denny, Haskew and Kirsch all evaluated the burn as "very successful." They felt that different areas of the hill cannot be burned.

"The north side probably needs to have hand-pruning done along the trails, maybe one chain-length on each side, because almost all fires are started by humans," Denny said. He said this would help keep any fire that was started from gaining too much momentum before it could be put out.

The Greater Kootenai County Fire Prevention Co-operative, which is mainly an education body sponsored by area fire departments, hosts a web site featuring the Tubbs Hill burn at www.befiresafe.org/Tubbs%20Hill.htm.