

Friends of Tubbs Hill

Fall 2018 Newsletter



“It ain’t over...”

Yogi Berra once quipped: “It ain’t over till it’s over”. His comment seems to be a very appropriate regarding our effort to keep a small portion of land at the south end of the city hall parking lot as public open space which would be incorporated into Tubbs Hill, rather than it be developed for housing.

In April 2017, the Tubbs Hill Foundation learned the city urban renewal agency, ignitecda, had plans to sell the land, approximately an acre in size, to private parties to be developed for housing. Ignite sought to recover expenses they incurred in acquiring the property. The THF board unanimously opposed this concept and several members of the board, including myself, attended the ignite board meeting that month. With support from Mary Lou Reed and Mayor Widmyer, we successfully argued the land should be kept public. An agreement was made between the city and ignite for a land swap. Ignite would trade the Young Avenue parcel for city land along the Centennial Trail in Riverstone, and in October, 2017, the city council approved a motion to enter into an agreement with ignite to formalize the trade. It seemed the land would remain much as is and become a part of Tubbs Hill and provide a good interface to McEuen Park.

Ignite’s plan was to use the newly acquired parcel as part of a proposal to build additional condos along the Centennial Trail. However, there was opposition to the plan, primarily from residents in the area and users of the trail who opposed having the new condos along the trail. When that plan was withdrawn, the city withdrew its proposal, and the parcel south of the city parking lot remained ignite’s.

Tony Berns, Executive Director of ignite, reached out to the Tubbs Hill Foundation with a proposal that would allow some of the land to remain open space and some to be developed as housing. The board members, who were originally involved in the discussions with the ignite board meeting in April, 2017, met to discuss the proposal, and concluded that we could not agree without full discussion from the entire board, and Mary Lou Reed, who was also part of the original discussion. We were able to present our view that we still believed the entire area should remain open space, and pledged to have a full discussion with our board and to determine what we could offer to ignite to help offset their investment in the property. We also urged them to continue to seek other options to resolve the situation in a way that the property could remain as open space.

With support from the mayor and the ignite board, no other action was taken, but future action will very likely occur. The Tubbs Hill Foundation will hold true to its mission as an advocate for keeping Tubbs Hill in a natural state, and will work with the city and ignite to reach a satisfactory resolution to the issue.

Truly, “it ain’t over till it’s over”.

Fall Colors On Tubbs?



With the spectacular fall color found throughout our city, and the abundance of evergreen trees on Tubbs Hill, it is easy to think that it lacks fall color, so we need to look elsewhere to see it. There is truth to that view, but there is also an assumption that is not true. Indeed, there is seasonal color change on Tubbs throughout the year, from the winter’s white blanket of snow, the multicolor burst of spring wildflowers, the green warmth of summer, to the tans and browns of dried grass and shrubs in the fall.

There is also a good smattering of more traditional fall colors to be found. I recently discovered a blaze of crimson and bright green foliage, and brilliant red berries from previously unnoticed blackberry bushes, and the bright yellow green of Rocky Mountain Maples. There is also the orange glow of the understory when backlit by the sun, and the smoky blue-gray of an old stump nestled among brown and orange leaves and stems of shrubs, and how could one not notice the many brightly colored orange-red berries of the heavily laden Mountain Ash, whose leaves do turn a marvelous golden color.

Indeed, when it comes to what Tubbs Hill has to offer, there is a time for every season....or perhaps it’s better to say a season for every time, even for fall color on Tubbs. Besides, tan and brown are colors!

By George Saylor

A Virtual Tour of Tubbs Hill Trees

There's a lot to see while walking Tubbs Hill. The surrounding beauty of the lake and mountains alone really makes the walk worthwhile. But what about the trees through which the trail winds? While some trees are nice and green, others are "sick", dying, deformed and dead.

The expanded narrative of our walk that covers bark beetle activity in ponderosa pine and Douglas-fir and tree plantings, with photos, can be found on the Tubbs Hill Foundation website <http://www.tubbshill.org/virtual-tour>.

On the upper Fire Road there is a great view of the lake and mountains. We also had a view of some "plants" growing on ponderosa pine branches. This is Mistletoe, but not the species we hang over doorways at Christmas. This is a parasitic



plant that over time causes "witches brooming", and slows the tree growth. The seeds are "jet propelled" away from the female plants due to a high internal liquid pressure when the wind blows this time of year. The seeds are sticky and when landing on another pine branch below will send a "root" into the inner bark and start growing another mistletoe plant. This often happens on young trees down slope. The mistletoe plant deforms the branches, and young trees likely will not be able to grow up to be a tall well-formed ponderosa pine. Pruning off infected branches on these young trees can give the trees a good chance of developing normally. This could be done by volunteers under the direction of the Parks and Recreation Department.

We continue our walk on the main trail around to the east side, and at the wooden bridge, you can look up the draw and see several Douglas-fir that are "sick", dying and dead. This is Armillaria Root Rot fungus at work. The soil borne fungus

"eats" Douglas-fir roots, and most of these trees have overlapping root systems. Armillaria is present and active in all of the Douglas-fir stands on the hill. There is no chemical cure for this root rot. On a positive note, ponderosa pine, western larch and western white pine are very resistant to Armillaria. These resistant species in various combinations have been planted, starting in 2006, and will continue to be planted by volunteers in the root rot mortality areas. The planting projects are organized by the city, with Tubbs Hill Foundation support.

While on the subject of snags, these dead trees when on the ground provide a valuable source of soil organic matter and nutrients. It takes about the same number of years as the tree's age to incorporate into the soil. So, a 100-year-old tree, once on the ground, takes about 100 years to rot into and become part of the soil mantle. You will also see snags that have been felled by the city that were a threat to public safety.



We continue walking on around to the north side. This is the more moist side of the hill. Over the last 50 years Norway maples had become established, initially by birds, and later by natural seeding as the maples matured. In 2010 these non-native trees were girdled to make room for the native white pine, larch and ponderosa pine that were planted in 2011 by volunteers. These planted trees will become the

dominant natural tree canopy for our great grandchildren to enjoy.

Walking back to the 3rd. St. entrance, I contemplated Nature's timeline compared to our daily lives. Perhaps next spring we can do a virtual walk around the hill featuring the flowers.

By Mark Weadick, photographs by James Fillmore

CDA Urban Forestry Grows

It is with mixed feelings that CDA's Forestry Department and the Tubbs Hill Foundation say goodbye and thanks to Katie Kosanke, Urban Forestry Coordinator since 2012. During the past decade, Katie has truly been a Friend of Tubbs Hill and the THF beginning in 2007 as a seasonal worker. Charged with oversight of "all aspects of the Urban Forestry Program" She has been responsible for permits, public tree inventory, tree inspections, city liaison to the Urban Forestry Committee, seedling plantings in natural open space parks, fuel mitigation, public education and "anything having to do with trees" according to the city website, she has done all that and much more. And she has done so with her radiant smile.

Bill Greenwood, Parks Superintendent, says that "I can't begin to describe what an asset she is to our department, not only is she our Urban Forester, but she also provides office coverage for the parks, cemetery and trail divisions.

"When she informed me that she was taking a new job in Spokane, outwardly I was excited for her and this wonderful career opportunity, on the inside my heart sank understanding how invaluable she is. I will be hard pressed to find a replacement of her caliber. Katie is extremely good with all of our customers and her fellow employees with an unmatched upbeat attitude. We lost a gem of a person and she will be greatly missed."

As the search for a new Forestry Coordinator begins, the THF hopes that Katie's replacement will not only continue the fine work she has given our community, but also have an expanded scope to address new challenges facing urban forester/arborist like climate change & fires as they impact the health of the hill.



Popsicle Money Donated

Many young children have lemonade stands or some variation thereof. Not many of them will give away their summer earnings, but that is just what Thomas and Finley Taylor did. Numerous times during the hot days of summer they operated their popsicle stand, located just across from the northern edge of the Eastside Tubbs Hill Park. They live next door to Norm (Stickman) and Kim (Walkabout) and told Norm they wanted to give their money to help Tubbs Hill. I was privileged to receive their donation of over \$45.00 and able to thank them for their thoughtfulness and generosity. Both are students at Sorenson Elementary school. It is a good thing to know that another generation will grow up caring about Tubbs Hill. Thank you Jordan and Finley!

Board Member Honored

Congratulations are in order for our board member Jessica Bryant for her most recent award. Jessica is currently the Idaho Conservation League artist-in-residence and her works have graced the recent covers of their magazine. At the 23rd annual Mayor's Arts Awards, Jessica was presented with an Arts in Education Award for her work in promoting art in education in our schools. Among her work is the work she did with students at Sorenson Elementary School to create a large mural of Tubbs Hill. She also helped them do a Junior activity book filled with learning activities they could do on Tubbs. Congratulations Jessica!

Lost & Found?

As a Friend of Tubbs Hill have you ever been on the hill at a trail intersection and seen hikers looking a bit confused as they are pointing in various directions. We have. A lot! We have stopped countless times to ask: "Can we help?"

In most cases these hikers are unsure which way to proceed. We give directions and for some we have led them to the appropriate trail. The hikers are quite appreciative and we are happy to help.

But what if we are not there to offer assistance? These hikers may not enjoy the trail they chose when it doesn't lead to where they want to go. Another very important consequence is that we have noticed that many of the hikers have or are about to take a non-official trail that is prone to erosion. We want happy hikers and as discussed in previous newsletters, we want to mitigate soil erosion.

In order to help hikers and the soil members of the THF board have walked the hill this summer and identified where it would be helpful to place, move or change signage. We affirmed our need for this effort during our surveys as we assisted numerous hikers who needed directions. As part of that effort we have also developed some recommendations for trail names and color coding. As an example, we have proposed that the trail circumnavigating the hill currently labeled as the "Main Trail" on some signs would be named "Lakeshore Loop" with a blue color code. It is important to note that it is not our intention to fill the hill with signs. The signs would be small and blend with the hill. We have also proposed that QR codes could be placed on some signs that would link to the online trail map. The main trail maps at the McEuen /3rd Street and East Tubbs Hill entrances would also be updated.

We have met with the Coeur d'Alene Parks Department staff to discuss our recommendations and they have agreed with our concern and have agreed to take this task on. The latest action is that the staff will review our recommendations in the field and determine the exact location for the signs. It was pointed out that some locations may require some thought on the type and location of the support structure due to the rock and shallow soils common at many trail intersections. The hope is to have new signage in place by next spring.



Friends of Tubbs Hill

Mission Statement

Tubbs Hill, Inc. is a non-profit association dedicated to the preservation of Tubbs Hill City Park as a unique and natural lakeshore forest typical of North Idaho while providing for compatible public use. We act as advocates for the park; advise the city administration on issues pertaining to the park; and support volunteer efforts, fund raising, community relations, and other tasks as needed to achieve this goal.

Visit us at www.tubbshill.org

Tubbs Hill, Inc.
P.O. Box 3061
Coeur d'Alene, ID 83816-3061

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Friends of Tubbs Hill

Our Sincere Thanks To Our Recent Contributors:

The mission of the THF, to keep Tubbs Hill natural and still allow for compatible public use, is made possible in large part by the support of the many friends of Tubbs Hill. Your support comes in several ways, one of which is financial contributions. We want to thank the following for their generous financial support in 2018 as well as those who made anonymous contributions during Art in the Park.

Andrea Bershad
Mary Jo Kringas
Jack & Helen Yuditsky
Mark & Judith Weadick
Sherry Robinson
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Tubbs Hill Monthly Meetings

Please join us for our monthly meetings held the second Thursday of every month, at 8:30 a.m. at Calypsos, 116 E. Lakeside. For more details, visit tubbshill.org or email gsaylercda@aol.com.

Our sincere apologies if we have failed to include your name. Please let George Saylor know at 664-2787. We will be sure to print your name in the upcoming newsletter.

New Members Wanted! Please join us!