

Edelweiss Newsletter
Summer 2008

President's Message by Pat Leigh

The summer of 2008 is off to a running start:

- On Sunday, June 29, Trailblazers blazed through more than 400 feet of trail, creating a path from Homestead, across the meadow, to the pool. We hope its inviting appearance will result in many feet tramping down any weeds that seek to grow in the disturbed soil, so please use it! Those of us who worked on the project enjoyed seeing the amazing transition take place in just a few short hours thanks to Jan and Will Fohrell's thorough planning and a great crew of volunteers! We need just a few more chips and two or three stairs at the top to complete our first trail. Craig Hook and Larry Miller have spent many hours of community service to identify the boundaries of our trails so that Trailblazers are sure to be working on clearly designated trails. Watch for announcements on our website under the new hotlink: "Trail System – Trailblazers." The next work party will be scheduled soon. Many thanks to our Crew Boss Alex Hall, and volunteers Tom, Lin and Michael Lasater; Susan Touchstone; Linda McWhirter; Mary Kiesau; Larry Miller; Pat Leigh and last but not least, Jan and Will Fohrell who co-chair the Trailblazers Committee. Also thanks to Mike Goudzwaard; Kai Bottomley; and the Konens for all the wood chips. Our priority for this summer will be to clear trails in areas likely to help keep families with children off the roads while walking to and from the pool. Trailblazers blaze on!

- Bears and news of bear sightings abound. On Saturday they visited a home on Homestead but the owner was able to scare them off. On Sunday night the closest encounter yet came when, according to Larry and Blue Goldie of Trillium Road, "... a bear crashed through our screen door in an attempt to enter our house! Thanks to Scooby and our yells, he fled quickly, though the door is ruined. Seems they are getting pretty bold." And as we go to press, an even closer encounter occurred at the Caesar residence when according to John, "*The Cinnamon Bear (approx. 200 lbs) made a visit to our house last night (Monday, June 30) at 2:00 a.m. He climbed to our top porch where we keep our bird feeders and store seed (about 15 feet high). This porch does not have stairs so he literally climbed the supporting posts. I heard noises last night, walked to the open window and found myself 6 inches from this cuddly fellow. Neither of us moved for about 15 seconds except he did move his head within two inches of me to take a sniff or two. He then bent back down to work on his supper while I slowly closed my screenless window and went back down stairs to catch my breath. He just ate for about an hour while my entire family watched. Pretty cool but he's getting dangerously bold. He returned at 4:00 a.m., this time to our bedroom glass door. We awoke to my dog barking at him and Cinnamon Bear just looking around our bedroom. Surprisingly, he returned yet another time this afternoon at 2:00 p.m. (yes, mid-day). He again climbed up to the deck, this time to greet my middle daughter Maddie who was working on a project. She*

screamed and he decided to climb back down. He sat in our yard for a while then rambled on down the ravine. Had he run out of birdseed, he would have gladly climbed through one of our many 2nd story open windows for a romp through the kitchen. He's definitely hunting for delectables with no fear of going inside to find them."

We can't stress enough: for your own safety and that of the bears, please read our newly posted information on our Edelweiss website and follow the excellent guidelines researched and written by Mary Kiesau. Our management team is working closely with authorities and we are doing everything possible to humanely trap our bears. If we all cooperate by seeing that the ONLY tempting food left outdoors is the bait in the bear trap, perhaps we'll have better luck. Thank you for being bear-wise.

- Several members of Edelweiss hosted a very informative pie and ice cream event with the Methow Conservancy on Saturday, June 28, in the campground area. We learned that the Conservancy is working to complete what will be their 67th Conservation Easement with an owner of almost 70 acres of riparian property located just downstream of the Weeman Bridge, adding to an impressive 7+ mile riparian corridor along the Methow River through the Big Valley... Sounds wonderful right? If you support the idea of such conservation easements and want to have a say in the development of the beautiful Methow Valley, you should be aware that, for the first time in 42 years, Okanogan County is in the process of preparing a long-range plan for just that. Now is your chance to get involved. Watch the Methow Conservancy's website for announcements of public hearings and we will do our best to post notices on our website, at the mailboxes, and in the campground area. You'll find information on how to participate in the process in the upcoming issue of the Methow Conservancy's E-News. Call the Conservancy at 996-2870 or email: info@methowconservancy.org for a free subscription to their monthly electronic newsletter. You don't have to be a member to subscribe. Here is a synopsis of the information that will be in the Conservancy's July E-News:

"You may download the current Draft of the Comprehensive Plan Update at: <http://www.okanogancounty.org/planning/> and get familiar with how the Comprehensive Plan is structured.

Contact the Planning Department to learn which "Neighborhood Group" you are in and when it is meeting next. Participating in these meetings and sharing your thoughts regarding how best to plan for the future of the Methow Valley is critically important.

The Comprehensive Plan provides the road map for future land use, taking into consideration everything from farmland protection to future infrastructure. Taking the time to get involved today will help to ensure that the Methow Valley of the future remains a place that is grounded in the values of our local community."

- For those of you who received letters asking for your cooperation with the Firewise project, we have received a positive response from 65 out of the 101 lot owners who were contacted. Because our grant application was approved by the U.S. Forest Service, but is not yet funded, we do not expect to see any actual work get underway until the fall.
- As you will see (below) from our General Manager, Dick Volckmann's report, we're going to have a busy summer in Edelweiss, with road upgrades, new waterlines being installed across the upper meadow, and the installation of three-phase electric power along East Fawn to Highland, as well as logging trucks to contend with. We should all be on the alert when driving through our community. Please do your best to maintain the 15 mph speed limit and drive with care.
- Many members of our community enjoy nothing so much as peering into a clear, crisp, inky dark sky filled with stars. Save some energy! If you notice outdoor lights on at night, remember those stargazers and turn out your lights.

As the newly elected President of the EMC's Board of Directors, I consider it to be my responsibility to bring all matters of concern to our community before the Board for discussion and action. Please feel free to contact me via email at: patricialeigh1@mac.com or 509-996-3303 with any questions or concerns you might have. I look forward to working with you and for you.

Sincerely,
 Pat Leigh
 (I'll leave a light out for you.)

General Manager's Report

Richard P. Volckmann

After a colder-than-normal spring, the last week of June has finally brought us the first hot weather of the summer. Today, (June 29th), the temperature is forecast to reach over 100 degrees in Winthrop. (Just thought you'd like a weather forecast.)

Along with summer, in the past few weeks Edelweiss has been visited by bears - at least 5 or 6 of them by various descriptions. They've been marauding bird feeders, garbage cans and any other food source they can find. No one has had a confrontation with any of the furry folk; they're just interested in the food. So with that in mind, please don't leave garbage in cans that can be broken into, put bird feeders, even humming-bird feeders, above 'bear height', and as a precaution, don't go to bed at night with only your screen door as your security. We don't want to have a situation which endangers residents, and we don't want to endanger the bears.

Our branch chipping program has been held up by mechanical problems. First, Craig discovered a broken part on the chipper, and then when that was fixed, the tractor refused to start. It is currently at the tractor hospital in Okanogan. When we get it back, we will begin with the chipping.

Our plans for the garbage area are nearly complete. As a reminder to all full time residents, we will be switching over from the current system, which is getting out of hand with more than 45 garbage cans in the refuse building, to a more efficient system which will replace the individual cans with four dumpsters. We have had a concrete pad poured for the dumpsters we hope to have the new program in operation in the next few weeks. We will no longer receive individual bills from Methow Valley Sanitation Co., rather they will bill Edelweiss directly, and Edelweiss, in turn, plans to include the cost along with our individual water bills. Our calculations indicate that this will be a monetary savings to everyone, and certainly will decrease the garbage hassle.

We are currently taking bids for removing the dirt from and re-roofing the campground building. When we have finally completed this project it is hoped that we will no longer be able to call it the ‘sod hut’.

The US Forest Service informs us that log hauling will soon commence on East Fawn Creek Road. The logging company will be taking out approximately 2 million board feet of trees, a process that will take about two months.

Finally, in the next few days, McHugh Excavating is scheduled to begin the upgrade to the first 3,000 feet of Homestead and Highland Roads. You may experience some minor delays during this process, but we think you will be pleased with the results. We’re told that at least one lane of traffic will be kept open most of the time. During rare total road closure (never overnight) we will provide detours. The upgrade should take four to six weeks.

Have a great summer everyone. And keep cool.

Dick Volckmann

Linda’s Message

Hi Everyone!

Not much to add to our illustrious and erudite Manager’s and President’s Report. Just a few items:

RECYCLING

Betsy Cushman, our wonderful *Methow Recycles* manager, has asked that I include some important information for you in our newsletter. So here it is, in Betsy’s own words:

“As I described at the annual meeting in May, Methow Recycles is developing a depot site on Horizon Flats in Winthrop which will enable easier access to recycling drop-off, especially for those in the upper valley. Thanks to grants and donations received last year, we developed the site and bought the equipment for cardboard recycling at the site. This is available right now.

We are closing in on our goal of raising \$39,000 to complete the equipment acquisition which will enable the collection of other materials at Horizon Flats. With another \$14,000 contributed or pledged we can order the equipment and lock in current prices. As you know, the price of steel is rising rapidly, and this equipment is already 12% more than it was a year ago. Delivery of the equipment generally takes 60-90 days, so pledges would not need to be collected until then.

In the current phase of this project the site will be available during non-snow months. Future fundraising efforts will be directed toward construction of a structure to enable this to be a year ‘round facility.

Methow Recycles is a 501c3 non-profit corporation and your contributions may be tax deductible. We are also able to receive donations through transfer of securities.

Please contact Betsy Cushman at betsy@methowrecycles.org or 996-2696 with any questions. Contributions to Methow Recycles labeled “Horizon Flats” may be sent to PO Box 1057, Twisp, WA 98856.

WHILE WE'RE ON THE SUBJECT OF GARBAGE

As we change over to a flat fee system of garbage disposal, it may be tempting to be less concerned about the amount of garbage placed in the new dumpsters. Remember, however, that **along with the ecological benefits of recycling, there is the benefit of keeping our garbage fees down by continuing to reduce, reuse, and recycle.**

FIRES & BURNING

I frequently get questions about fires and burning. (If you missed the Annual Meeting when this topic was discussed, please check out our website, www.edelweissmethowvalley.org and look at the minutes from the meeting). Also on the website is the “Welcome” link where you can check out the section under “Fires”.

Some additional bits of information:

1. It's illegal to burn garbage and/or burn in barrels. Also, it is illegal to burn treated wood, construction debris, and even paper and cardboard, as these materials produce toxic smoke when burned.
2. If you have questions or concerns about burning, call the Department of Ecology Central Regional Office, **509-575-2490**, or Ecology's toll free complaint line, **1-866-211-6284**.

3. For information regarding **burn bans, DNR 1-800-323-2876, Okanogan #6526**

THANK YOU.....

to all of you who have been slowing down and abiding by the 15 mph limit. Even when it's not dry and dusty, this limit reduces the chance that you will come around a corner and hit a pet, person, or oncoming car. When going by homes, remember to peek in your rear view mirror for an indication of how much dust is produced. Remind your guests and contractors to be considerate as well.

to those of you who are being proactive and reducing fuels and fire risk on your property,

and to those of you who are familiarizing yourselves with whitetop, knapweed, and other noxious weeds, and keeping them controlled so they don't invade the property of others. (Again, use our website link, "Noxious Weeds", for more information....or call the office if you have questions, 996-9232)

And that's all I have to say.....for now, anyway! ☺

(end)