

Rimrock to Riverside (Palisades Park) Fact Sheet

For use when leading INLC hikes at R2R

Authored by Todd Dunfield, March 2023

Gather Phase

- Arrive 30 Min Early (2110 N. Houston Rd. Spokane WA 99208)
- Greet everyone as they arrive and learn their name, generally welcome them
- Let them know we will get started once more people arrive and the start time arrives
- Begin by introducing yourself, name, title maybe include some fun fact
- As everyone to circle up and introduce themselves, potentially include an ice breaker question (skip this if it is cold)
- Remind everyone of safety- most notably moose!
- I would also add that hiding valuables in your car is a good idea at this trailhead.

Beginning The Hike Phase

- Introduce yourself and your volunteer title
- Remind people of the dangers present on the hike, mostly that if we see a moose the group will remain a good distance away and never approach.
- Between 2018-2022 INLC worked to conserve 110 acres of land made up of 10 different parcels which we called at that time the “Rimrock to Riverside” project.
- These lands were purchased by the Spokane County Conservation Futures Program in 2022 and the City of Spokane assumed ownership immediately. Thus these lands are now part of Palisades Park, a city park that lies outside the city boundaries in Spokane County.
- It is important to note that in the 2022 Conservation Futures nomination round this property (R2R) ranked number one among all the nominations.
- The conservation project became an INLC project because the local neighbors here in the Palisades area reached and to INLC and asked for technical assistance in achieving their long-term plan of connecting Palisades Park to Riverside State Park
- As hikers journey southward along Rimrock Drive they will encounter a number of old gate posts along both sides of the road marking old park boundaries.

Hiking Rimrock Drive

- Heading south on Rimrock Drive is an opportunity to talk about the fact that this road, now a walking biking path, dates back to the 1907 Olmsted Brothers visit to Spokane and the very first Park Plan for the City.
- This scenic overlook was one of three “Parkways” for scenic drives that the Olmsted Brothers convinced the city to save. They are Aubrey White Parkway, High Drive, and Rimrock Drive. Even in the early 1900’s the park planners could see the importance of saving these areas for the public. They were not meant to be sold and used for stately mansions.

- The area that is currently the 700+ acres known as Palisades Park was once platted for subdivision and homes. Even today if you are savvy with the Spokane County “SCOUT” map that allows you to see property ownership within the county you can see how this park was planned to one day be a neighborhood.
- Once you have walked 1,000-1,500 feet from the north side parking lot you will begin to see patterned ground to the west (right side of the trail while you are hiking) those lumps of dirt with grasses and a few trees are Mima Mounds. Geologists are not sure, but they may have been formed by pocket gophers and years of wind/water erosion. The best Mima Mounds in the area can be seen/visited at Fishtrap Lake, a BLM recreation site.
- The large boulders along the road are remnants of when this was a scenic drive. Unfortunately in the late 1990’s the city parks gated and closed access to drive on this Parkway because of excess vandalism, trash, and illegal activities.
- The first viewpoint of the city is located approximately ½ mile into the Rimrock Drive walk. There visitors can see the entire city and most major peaks like Mica Peak, Mt. Spokane, and Beacon Hill. This is a great vantage point to discuss the Ice Age Floods and Glacial Lake Missoula.
- Continuing down another 1/3 of a mile along Rimrock Drive will bring you to a new (newish) park bench with a concrete pad. This bench has a story connected to Rimrock to Riverside. A past INLC board member was inspired by the R2R project and made financial contributions to help complete almost half of the 10 parcels that made up the project area. In gratitude for his support INLC partnered with Spokane Parks to install two benches along Rimrock Drive. The second bench ¼ mile south is named “Patsy’s Place.” In honor of his departed wife Patsy.

Springtime is the best time to visit Palisades Park. The flowers in bloom in this area are quite amazing. Multiple Moose usually make Palisades Park their home in the springtime. Often you can find mothers with their calves at this time. One word of caution about springtime, the deer ticks come out and can be quite abundant at times in this area. It is always important to do a tick check at the end of your hike and once again when you return home from Palisades Park in the spring and summer time.

David Douglas’s first journal entries about Spokane spoke to his wonderment with the area. He described the forest and flowers as parklike by European standards. He commented that the trees were spaced out in such a way that a person could ride their horse at full gallop through the trees while passing a carpet of flowers (we assume arrowleaf balsamroot) while going through the forest.

Leading groups at palisades means you will need to know at least a little bit about basalt. The basalt at Palisades Park is Wanapum Basalt which flowed in from the center of the state. The Mt. Mazama Ash also shaped this area quite a bit and added clay on top of the basalt to help form the ponds we see today. Basalt fun fact . . . columnar basalt cooled slowly, aerated basalt was near the top or bottom of the lava flow and cooled quickly and is less dense and breaks more easily.

Recreation- almost every type of recreationist from cross country skier to trail runner and butterfly catchers use this park.

Top 10 List of things to hit while on a hike at R2R (Palisades Park)

1. Mima Mounds live here – everyone should know what a mima mound is
2. Milkweed grows here and attracts pollinators like monarch butterflies
3. INLC successfully conserve this property in 2022 with Conservation Futures \$\$\$
4. Neighborhood interest in conservation has been high for decades for conservation
5. This park gap project helped complete 11 miles of habitat corridor from long like to Indian Canyon Golf Course
6. Numerous conservation angels assisted by buying 10-acre parcels and partnering with INLC
7. Wildfires have burned portions of the park in 2015 and 2022.
8. US Fish & Wildlife assisted with wetland restoration on the NW corner of the property in 2021
9. Red-winged black birds can often be heard making their birdsong here
10. This project was made possible by private philanthropy and conservation futures