

Waikiki Springs Nature Preserve Fact Sheet

For use when leading INLC hikes at WSNP

Authored by Todd Dunfield, Feb 2023

Gather Phase

- Arrive 30 Min Early (12354 N. Fairwood Ln. Spokane WA 99218)
- 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)
- Show everyone the map on the trailhead kiosk. Explain the route planned and distance/time estimates
- Remind everyone of safety- most notably at WSNP moose and rattle snakes pose the biggest danger, but other hazards exist like rocks, and potentially meeting off leash dogs.

Beginning The Hike Phase

- Wood Railing: 200 ft down the trail, often include our first 1 min pause to point out the standing water (pond) associated with a natural spring found just below the trail and within sight. Spring/Summertime often means brush obscures this to a large degree.
- Switchback #1 This is often the “Geology and forestry” stop
 - The forest in this location is mostly made up of Douglas Fir, as opposed to Ponderosa Pine
 - It is typically 8-10 degrees cooler here on this hillside
 - The forest composition of large Doug Fir’s remind many people of Western Washington – not Spokane.
 - This is due to the underlying bedrock in this area being basalt, and more importantly basalt with fractures between it where the Spokane Rathdrum Prairie Aquifer terminates and the 52 degree water rushes from the hillside.
- Switchback #2 This is often the “First People’s” stop
 - For approximately 8,000-10,000 years the Spokane Tribe of Indians lived here in this forest and along the banks of this river.
 - More specifically the “middle band” of the Spokane Tribe lived here.
 - Their name for themselves in Salish is synonymous with the salmon who once swam up the Little Spokane in Great numbers (60-80K)
 - Downstream is the Spokane House – First fur company trading outpost in the entire region
 - Upstream there lies a historic hunting/fishing village of the Spokane Tribe
 - The Spokane Tribe of Indians historically relied on Salmon for 80%-90% of their food
 - Currently the Spokane Tribe is partnering with other neighboring tribes through UCUT to re-introduce salmon pack into these waters (Chinook / Steelhead)

- Switchback #3 This is often the history of the Waikiki Dairy stop
 - This switchback includes a great viewpoint of the valley floor, and rattlesnake ridge across the valley
 - The current place name (4th in history) is Waikiki Springs because JP Graves built his dairy and mansion on the 2,000 acre property here in the early 1900's.
 - Today what is called "Bozarth Mansion" by the current owners of Gonzaga University was once known as Waikiki
 - JP Graves owned the Waikiki Dairy with 1,000-1,750 cows that produced milk, butter, etc. from 1904-1948 on the land.
 - Most, if not all the concrete foundations found on the land today date back to that historic use

Reaching the Valley Floor Phase

- Immediately on your left at the end of the trail/road is the old "Dairy Manager's house" now owned by Shirley.
- The creek running through the front yard of the home is actually ground water from the spring up above (seen at the start of the hike)
- Paramount to be respectful of the neighbors in this area, follow the yellow footprints, staff off lawns and attempt to be quieter than necessary
- Entering the River bottoms where Moose, Beaver, Great Blue Herons, Waterfowl and Bald Eagles are often seen and enjoyed

At the Bridge Phase

- It is at this point that it usually makes the most sense to tie in the story of the Spokane Tribe of Indians and their ongoing efforts to reintroduce salmon into the LSR
- The Aug 2021 historic salmon release is most notable (where 51 adult chinook were released by the STOI) in partnership with WDFW and INLC
- The bridge was re-decked by INLC in Nov 2022 to allow for better access into the property
- Bird watching around the bridge is quite good. Often mallards, redwing blackbirds and great blue heron can be seen here.
- The LSR is a large river basin that reaches almost to Newport, WA and up the sides of Mt. Spokane. It is largely spring fed at lakes like Diamond Lake, Sacheen Springs, etc.
- The fish usually seen over the side of the bridge are Mountain Whitefish (aka Large Scale Suckers) and trout.
- Historically the salmon runs up the LSR numbered into the 60,000-80,000 range based on surviving journals from the early 1800's
- The salmon population was overfished on the Columbia River near present day Vancouver/Portland and salmon runs continually decreased until the Little Falls Dam in 1910
- The habitat for salmon on the LSR is very good for a number of reasons
 - The presence of cold/clear water
 - Streambed complexity
 - Gravels found on the bottom of the river are of high quality for salmon egg next building (known as Redds)

- The overstory of trees and bushes found along both banks of the river add shade to the river for cooling as well as large woody debris in the river when trees die and fall into the river.

Across the LSR Bridge Phase

- Upon reaching the clearing there are often bald eagles perched in the trees to the west (mature eagles have the white head denoting approx. 4+ years of age)
- The bald eagle nest is first viewable from this raised roadbed to the North West along the river bank. It is best seen in winter and spring before the foliage is able to leaf out.
- The ridge rocky ridge to the north is called Rattlesnake Ridge
- After crossing the raised roadbed visitors are greeted by the Waikiki Springs Welcome sign and Trailhead Kiosk with the map of WSNP.
- The three stacked loops (eagle, granite, aster) lead to different parts of the property
- Benches located throughout the property offer places for visitors to sit and peacefully observe nature and take in the views.

Top 10 List of things to hit while on a hike at WSNP

1. INLC conserved the 95-acres of property at WSNP in 2020 with 1.5 million from the WA state legislature
2. The three goals for this property have been A)to provide public access, B)to partner with the Spokane Tribe of Indians to reintroduce salmon into the LSR C) to provide a location for environmental education for K-16 in the Spokane Area.
3. WDFW owns the adjacent 114-acres creating over 200 acres of open lands for the public
4. Salmon Reintroduction will most likely take 20 years and approximately \$200 million
5. Monthly visits to WSNP (as recorded by the trail counter) is between 3,000 and 5,000
6. The long-term vision is to connect the WDFW lands with the conserved lands downriver past the Kalispel Golf Course. This would be an amazing habitat and recreation corridor.
7. The Spokane River Keeper is assisting in tracking the temperature above and below the "Springs" entering the LSR to have a longitudinal record of river water temperature in the face of climate change.
8. WSNP has benefited greatly from community volunteers who helped with stewardship activities like tree planting and trail development.
9. The Fairwood Neighborhood and Fairwood Farmers Market have both contributed to Waikiki Springs in meaningful ways
10. Salmon are a keystone species that will benefit every organism from trees, humans, bears once they return to this ecosystem that is 110 years without their marine derived nutrients.