

Minutes of the 08/06/05 Combined Board Meeting

Vice President Mike Messenger called the meeting to order at 9:30.

Kathy Earnst gave the Treasurer report.

Kathy also reported that the DNR (Department of Natural Resources) should have three locks for the gate at Walker Valley. Stu has been getting the lock and providing them to DNR. He will be getting more as the DNR has been replacing the locks quite often. Ed welded a lock to a chain earlier, that didn't work, as someone cut the chain and took everything. It was also reported that the gate has been open most of the time during the day.

Old business:

Stu set up reservations for next years meeting at the Palace Café.

Mike said the web site on prospecting is still available. It is more of a message board about new and old collecting sites. He asked that Glenn put the address in the Council Reporter.

Prospecting Washington:

<http://sargo.nwife.org/prospect/forum>

New business:

Mike said he had been talking to Ed about a new site. They will do more investigating when the Pow-Wow meets in the area on Sept. 2nd, if the site isn't under fire restrictions.

Jim Cotant said he has heard rumors of people coming up from California and joining into some of our field trip in Montana and then filing a claim on the site and charging a fee to collect. It wasn't clear whether this is occurring at the current time or if it has been some past activity.

Attendance was poor, with only 12 attending. This was probably do to the Federation show the same weekend and summer time when people are on vacation.

Wagonmaster's:

Ed was not in attendance, so Mike reported that the Greenwater trip had a number of new people and everybody got some good material.

The next trip is to Rimrock Lake. Mike showed some thunder eggs he had gathered at the Rimrock Lake site.

Stu reported the summer trip to Utah and other places was a good trip. There were about 15 people with about half of those children. Stu reported that it was a good trip and they gather as much material as they wanted at each site, in fact as they got a good example of the material they were ready to move on to the next site.

Jim Cotant (Spokane club) reported that there was a paved road up the east end of Saddle Mtn. He did not recommend taking a camper or trailer up the road. He had placed two stakes along the road to indicate the start of the area that we can collect on, but the cattle have been using them as scratching post and they are now missing. He is planning on contacting the BLM about putting more permanent post to identify where we could collect.

Submitted by

Bob Pattie – Secretary Pro-Tem

Off-Road Vehicle Enforcement Planned to Avoid Aircraft Accidents at Ranger Creek

Press Release Issued by the Forest Service

Due to aircraft and motor vehicle safety concerns, the Snoqualmie Ranger District of the Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest will enforce a closure of the Ranger Creek area (including the airstrip) to off-road vehicles (ORVs) off-highway vehicles (OHVs). Ranger Creek is located west of Highway 410, about 28 miles southeast of Enumclaw in Pierce County. The Forest Service will refer ORV/OHV operators to other areas.

Ranger Creek State Airport has operated as a public aviation facility since 1957 under a Forest Service special-use permit granted to the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) Aviation. The permit, reissued in 1995, covers 20 acres and includes the half-mile long runway, designated safety areas, aircraft parking, and runway protection zones.

The closure prohibits all motorized vehicles from the paved airstrip, and all ORVs/OHVs from the adjacent runway, safety areas, aircraft parking areas, and runway safety zones. The closure is intended to prevent serious accidents or personal injuries from conflicts between light aircraft and both conventional vehicles and ORVs/OHVs on or near the 2,700-foot airstrip. Later this year WSDOT plans to install a safety

fence around the runway's perimeter to control vehicle access.

WSDOT Aviation officials approached the Forest Service earlier this year requesting managers strictly enforce the ORV/OHV closure, which was approved by the Forest Service in 1995. Jim Franzel, District Ranger of the Snoqualmie Ranger District, said his agency's efforts to gain voluntary ORV and OHV operator compliance with the restrictions have been unsuccessful. Franzel acknowledged higher safety concerns with the influx of more ORVs/OHVs and continued indiscriminate use of them.

"We believe current ORV use is posing a grave danger to safe aircraft operations, as well as ORV operations," said John Sibold, WSDOT Aviation Director.

"The paved runway is showing signs of damage and is constantly covered with rocks, gravel, and airborne dust. This poses a substantial risk to aircraft and pilots operating out of Ranger Creek. Further, the runway is being used as a drag strip and the aircraft parking area has been damaged by ORV use. We have received pilot complaints of ORVs crossing in front of landing aircraft and not yielding to aircraft. Enforcement of the Forest Service closure is critical to continuing safe airport operations," Sibold said.

Franzel said his agency's challenge in the closure enforcement has been increased by a variety of other recreational pursuits near the airstrip.

"There are dispersed activities nearby that attract numerous forest visitors, primarily in the summer months," Franzel stated. "Among them are camping, hiking and other activities, including several hundred ORV operators."

"Over the last several years we have spent thousands of dollars at Ranger Creek on educational signs and security patrols to help recreational and ORV users understand the runway special-use permit for this area and the need to stay off of the runway and surrounding aircraft protection zones," Franzel said. "But the bottom line shows it hasn't worked and we have a serious public safety hazard. We are now left with no recourse other than full enforcement of the existing closure and enforcement of our Forest Plan standards and guidelines for this area. Those violating the closure could receive up to a \$5,000 fine."

Under the closure order, campers will still be able to drive their street legal motorized vehicles on designated access roads to the dispersed campsites in the Ranger Creek area. Access will remain open to the nearby Sun Top recreation area. The Forest Service recommends off-road riders to the Evans Creek area, south of the town of Wilkeson and the Carbon River. There are other ORV areas accessed by Highway 410 east in the Wenatchee National Forest. More information on specific sites is available at: www.fs.fed.us/r6/wenatchee/. More information about Ranger Creek State Airport is available at: www.wsdot.wa.gov/aviation/airports/Ranger.htm.

Washington State Department of Transportation 08/9/05

Field Trip Reports

by Ken Metz

Stone Age News 08/05

Kalama 05/14&15

The rock hounds that pre-registered for the Kalama field trip met at the Port of Kalama public park at 9am Sat morning. The owners of the land we hunt on had a limit of 50 persons entering each day. Bruce from the Bellevue club, the organizer for this trip, did a fantastic job of planning, and making sure all knew what the rules are for the privileges of entering the property behind locked gates. For safety concerns there was a person who stayed at the gate in case someone needed to get out. Thank you to all who volunteered to fill a time slot so no one person lost all day of collecting.

Many went to the popular site for finding crystal plates, geodes, jasper, and carnelian. On Saturday no one ventured to the Beaver Ponds area, with the weather somewhat wet, it would have been like swimming in mud, and some did that at the main dig area anyway. I am always amazed at the extent we go to reach for that elusive piece. Saturday we were all out of the gate at the correct time, and many headed to the park for the potluck. (Yes, this time we made it to the potluck) and it was good food, fun, and talking about the one we will get tomorrow. The weather cooperated and we were blessed with sun and good times. At night we were able to listen to the sound of thundering steel and watch the ships loaded heading out to somewhere.

Sunday morning, the chiefs were preparing the pancake breakfast, and the crowds gathered for the hunt. This day, many went to the Beaver Pond area. I did not have a chance to get there, and the rain came, and pored, and the fearless diggers dug. Asking as the people left for the day, all had fun (of course) and the rain did not detour anyone from finding something. Near the end of the day, our Chief, and most fearless leader, found a big, round soccer ball size, geode? thunderegg? It is something I will come back to hunt for. Remember if you want in next year, register early.

First Creek June 11-12

Rock hounds from as far away as over there, to the area over here met at 29 Pines camp at 9am to depart to the 1st creek gate. Wow, many people showed up for this One. We went directly to the gate and waited for the "gang" from camp to show with the keys. Be careful when parking near the gate, as the turn off is at a bend in the highway.

Once the gate was opened, the journey began. Go though the gate, follow that vehicle, pull over where they do, (all sounded good...except...well you should have been there.)

Some went to the thunder eggs site, area 1,2 or 3?. Other stopped to climb the hill at # 5 & 6. More went to the end of the road...kind of...and searched for the agate. From what I observed all who went had fun, no rain this time. Back to camp for the potluck and fun (we made it to the potluck this time). I don't remember who, but someone had a lamp where we looked at different material that fluorescence. Nice fire and conversation, deciding where and what to do tomorrow, how much fun Greenwater will be, etc.

Sunday morning pancake breakfast was great, no bugs, no rain, time to digggg!

After having a good description of what we could find at the different locations at 1st creek, we were off. This morning many of us hiked up a small incline to search for small round things (nodules?) and agate...of which we found both. We had so much fun at that location we stayed all day, until the gate timer went off.

The 1st creek area is full of different material, and I did not have a chance to go everywhere, so...until next time, happy rock hunting, and remember my birthday in August.

Greenwater July 23-24

Here I am, sitting at this \$12,000.00 desk, in my \$8,000.00 chair, chugging my V8 and thinking. (yeah I know-Ken thinking is not what your used to) so I'm reminiscing: I could be sitting on a hard rock, getting a sore butt, smashing my hand with a 4lb hammer, in the rain, and loving it. Sound familiar? If not, you need to get out and pound the hammer.

We went to the Greenwater camp early on Friday morning and met up with a few other rock hounds not able to wait until Sat am. We left to ensure a safe area for the group to collect at Upper George creek. The rain started early Friday morning, but no sane rock hound would let thunder (we were told it was "dry" thunder), rain & wind stop us from our appointed destination. We had a great time. We got wet, muddy, and collected some good material with some great friends. Friday night more happy people arrived, the rain had stopped, and the stories began. Sat morning 9am is the meeting time, and many people had showed. The groups started by finding Black agate and such near the camp area. Later in the day the group was headed for upper George creek to find the elusive purple agate. There must have been 25 or so on Saturday. After looking, searching and digging all day, we went back to camp for 6pm Potluck. Almost made it on time, 6:35pm, on the brighter side, we made it in time to eat. After dinner we had fun with horseshoes and a good fire.

Sunday morning a group of maybe 10 additional rockhounds show for lots of collecting and fun. After the morning agate fix, the group went up to George creek. We stayed in the area till the sun went down and arrived home late Sunday.

Field trips, or as one said, "rock expeditions" are a lot of fun. If you choose not to collect, but to enjoy the view, I always learn more about the hobby of collecting and the different things people do with what they find. If you want to experience some of this fun, join the PowWow "rock expedition" during September, or the Little Naches "rock expedition" in September. Remember our club picnic is August 20, as is the Lake Wenatchee "garnet expedition" on Aug 20-21.