



Tapteal Talk

President's Message

by Adam Fyall

Welcome to spring, everyone. By the time you are reading this, the forsythias will have bloomed, the willows will have popped, and the spring bird migration will be coming into full swing. I hope you will have many opportunities to enjoy our public lands and what nature has to offer.

Things are heating up with the Greenway as well, and over the next few pages you will be able to take in a big dose of what we have going on. As always, I thank you for your support and patronage; and of course, a special thanks to all of our many great volunteers.

Speaking of volunteers, I want to especially recognize our Secretary Diana McPherson who is spearheading our new docent and volunteer training program. Watch for emails and social media posts with more information about this effort. As we try to get more people involved in things like leading hikes, helping with school presentations, and various types of work parties, some training and support for people to help lead these activities will be most helpful.

I also want to thank volunteers, largely led by board members Dan Hansen, Stan Kuick, Dirk Peterson, and Carole Schuh, for a lot of winter cleanup and some of our more central locations such as the Chamna Preserve and Johnson Park. We have had a lot of downed trees, tumbleweeds, and other "vegetation management" situations that our volunteers have helped to mitigate.

Finally, I will mention that with spring comes Earth Day (Monday, April 22). Watch for related events during that latter half of April where you might be able to get out to help with some service work as well as enjoy some spring hikes. I think with the winter moisture we have had that it will be a stellar year for wildflowers, but also a strong year for the weeds. All the best.

Washington Invasive Species Council

by Adam Fyall

I currently sit on the Washington Invasive Species Council representing Eastern Washington counties. The Council meets quarterly both in person and via Zoom video. There is a fair amount of crossover with my work here with the Greenway.

The March meeting (Thursday, March 21, 9:00 am) will feature a presentation from the Benton Conservation District about their water stargrass efforts. This will be interesting for the Council because it's focus is exclusively on *non-native* invasive plant and animal species. Stargrass is native, but conditions in the lower Yakima River create a situation much like dealing with non-native invasives. The presentation will be 20-30 minutes. The time has not yet been set, but if you're interested in joining the meeting that day for the stargrass presentation, email us at taptealgreenway@gmail.com. Once the agenda is published, we will let you know the presentation time.

~ Board of Directors ~

Adam Fyall – President

Dan Hansen – Vice President

Diana McPherson – Secretary

Stan Kuick – Treasurer

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David McBurney

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Spring Cleaning

By Dirk Peterson

With the recent drier weather, we've gotten in some early spring-cleaning chores. Our initial focus was on removing tumbleweeds from our property in Amon Basin and from sections of the Tapteal Trail in the Horn Rapids development. This was accomplished using pitchforks and a rented trailer. However, the tumbleweeds were so thick along the Quail Ridge portion of the trail that we hired Wildlands to do the removal. They ended up hauling off 600 pounds of the prickly weeds.

In the meantime, we discovered that two trees had fallen across trails in Chamna Natural Preserve. The pictures show the first tree that fell across the access road leading to the Peninsula Loop Trail. Once that was cleared, we were able to drive into the Peninsula Loop Trail to remove most of a Russian olive tree that was blocking that trail.



Cleaning up tumbleweeds in the Horn Rapids development



Fallen tree near the Peninsula Loop Trail



All cleaned up. Thank you, Stan, Dan, David and Dirk.

Tapteal Water Trail ~ 2024 Events

by Adam J. Fyall



The water trail continues to draw interest and visitors, occasionally popping-up in travel blogs and other such places. In addition to trying to facilitate access, fun, and safety for all, we will again organize at least three “supported” paddle events this year.

I do fear the strong possibility of some low water this summer. While it has been wet by El Niño standards this winter season, it has also been relatively warm, especially in the mountains; and it could also start to really warm and dry up any time. In any event, here is the tentative schedule for Greenway-supported paddles. All are Saturdays:

- June 15 – Upper Section (Benton City to Horn Rapids Park)
- August 17 – Lower Section (Hyde Rd to Bateman Island)
- September 28 – Middle Section (Snively Rd to Hyde Rd)

By “supported” we mean that we provide a shuttle, safety briefing, and information for the stretch of river we will be on that day, and what participants can expect. We do not furnish gear, but we can help to put you in touch with companies locally who rent kayaks and paddleboards.

If any of you are interested in the full-day, 30-mile, Benton-to-Bateman paddle, contact Adam. If we get a minimum mass of people, we would look to do that in June.

Check the website and your email inbox in the coming months for more information.

Fox Island Update

by Adam J. Fyall

You might recall from the fall newsletter that Fox Island hit the market last summer. Fox Island is a roughly 13-acre property immediately north/upstream of the Van Giesen Street Bridge and across the river from our existing Tapteal Bend property. The property’s assessed value is around \$30,000 but was listed at \$399,000. That seemed ambitious.

We made an unsolicited offer on this property about 20 years ago. The Board discussed making an offer this time around at length and we were prepared to make an offer of \$30,000 to see where it would go from there. The listing was pulled from the market sometime in January. As of this memo we have no evidence that it has sold, and we will continue to monitor the situation.

Fox Island would be a nice addition to our conservation portfolio, but not at a ridiculous price. Given its location in the floodway, its zoning, and its lack of access, there really isn’t anything somebody can do with this property much beyond what it’s being used for now. It could be a great outdoor education venue, but we won’t overpay for that privilege.

News from Horn Rapids Park

By Adam Fyall

I lead this piece off with some sad news. As many of you will undoubtedly know, there was a fatality at the park just before New Year's. An 18-year-old Benton City man drowned at the Omaha Beach area. Toxicology came back negative and foul play is not suspected. Investigators believe this was just a very unfortunate accident.

On a lighter note, a big thank-you to the Native Plant Society and Benton Conservation District for organizing a sagebrush planting on the upper terrace above the HRP horse camp late last fall. We had fantastic, comfortable conditions on the day, which had been surrounded by a lot of good wet season moisture. A first-generation planting was done in that area about a decade ago and those plants are doing well.

Speaking of restoration, Benton County Parks took another step with a 300-acre application of Battalion Pro in the central part of the park. This was done via drone by a Richland-based company and that part was pretty cool in its own right. Battalion specifically targets cheatgrass and has had many great results in applications across the West. Battalion doesn't kill cheatgrass directly, but rather retards its growth and reproduction abilities. This is a long-term strategy, but it also took us a long time to get here.

We would like to put together some cleanup events in the lower part of the park (downstream of the boat launch). Please contact us at taptealgreenway@gmail.com if you would like to join one of our work parties as an individual, or if you have a group that would like to do a small service project.

Mike Lilga and Tom McClelland did some minor rehab work on the kiosk at Horn Rapids Park.
~ Thank you, Mike and Tom ~



Earth Day – April 22, 2024 “It’s Not a Day, It’s a Movement!”

By Kit McBurney

This year’s EARTHDAY.ORG theme is **Planet vs. Plastics**.

Per their website “Our theme, Planet vs. Plastics calls others to:

- Advocate for widespread awareness on the health risks of plastics
- Rapidly phase out all single-use plastics
- Urgently push for a strong UN Treaty on Plastic Pollution
- Demand an end to fast fashion”

The EARTHDAY.ORG website contains a lot of information - including the health risks of plastics and the movement to phase out single-use plastics.

There are many ways to reduce our use for single-use plastics and many of us may have already incorporated some of the following:

- Reusable water bottles (almost always on the go with me)
- Reusable shopping bags (including reusable cloth or mesh produce bags)
- Compostable utensils, plates and bowls for our picnics, lunches, BBQs and events

In support of this year’s theme and the goal for a Healthier Planet, let’s challenge ourselves to find additional ways to eliminate our need of single-use plastics and try to source more items with minimal plastic packaging.

In addition, I hope you can join (or host) an Earth Day community cleanup activity.

Maybe also commit to becoming a cleanup Rockstar by spending a few minutes on a regular basis picking up a bit of garbage in your favorite recreational areas. I know there are Rockstars already out there and the more the merrier (or I should say the cleaner our open spaces could be). 😊

Enjoy the Outdoors and Happy Spring!



Rockstars cleaning shoreline below 240



The Back Country Horsemen Youth and leaders cleaned up trash at Omaha Beach (HRP) last fall



Tapteal’s own Rockstar Stan Kuick
who hikes and cleans his favorite places regularly

Restoration Plantings

By Dirk Peterson

Fall and winter are the time of year for restoration plantings. Our first project of the season was at the Duportail Bridge construction site. In addition to sagebrush, we added some forbs around the existing restoration plantings. The area we were planting in had been used as a laydown yard during bridge construction. This made digging just six inches deep very challenging but we managed to get all of our plants, along with watering tubes, in the ground.

In November several board members helped with the YEER (Youth Environmental Education Through Restoration) planting on the grounds of Ray Reynolds Middle School. Last year their planting location was near the trailhead at Rattlesnake Slope. We've added watering tubes to last year's surviving plants (a couple dozen sagebrush) and have been performing supplemental watering to encourage them. In December the plants grown by Lindsay Gailey's fourth graders were planted at Rattlesnake Slope. Although mostly sagebrush, some forbs were also included in this planting.

In late January three board members had the opportunity to assist USFW with a planting project on the Arid Lands Ecology Preserve. Remember that cold spell we had? The original planting day had to be rescheduled because the sagebrush seedlings were frozen solid! This was the first time we had worked with a dibble bar. David would make a hole using the bar and drop in a seedling, Stan and I followed close behind closing up the holes around the plants. The crew of staff and volunteers were able to get all three thousand seedlings planted.



Planting at the Duportail Bridge site



Using a dibble bar on the ALE site