

Board Members

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Greetings MCPA Members! We've had a busy summer so far. The board has been active as usual with organizing our work parties; here is what's happened so far this year.

Members have finally finished the one and only interpretive site for Monte Cristo, called the Cameron-Lindgren Interpretive Site. Seven interpretive signs were designed by Louise Lindgren and produced by a company called, Fast Signs. They are vandal-proof signs with heavy duty metal. We have spent several years getting these made and installed. Lots of help was provided with labor from the Boy Scouts, many members, and sometimes even a few lucky (or unlucky) hikers who would be happening to walk alongside us and offered help carrying in supplies. It certainly was a group effort with great results. We hope everyone has a chance sooner than later to visit Monte Cristo and experience the new site. Since Monte Cristo Preservation Association owns the land supporting this, it will hopefully last a long, long time. In addition, similar and larger interpretive signs have also been placed in the lower townsite by the Forest Service cabins to help direct tourists to the interpretive site, as well as some other smaller ones placed by other areas of interest, such as the Concentrator and even up by Glacier Falls.

In other volunteer activities, members have been busy keeping the county road clear of fallen trees, brushing trails as well as the townsite, and checking on all the private cabins for vandalism. A shutter was replaced behind F.S. cabin number 2 and new hardware is being installed to secure the door better on one of those cabins as well. As some of you also are aware, the trail was severely damaged and washed out past Weden Creek, right by the exposed railroad ties over the river. The Forest Service has been creating a new bypass to better accommodate hikers and bikers going to the townsite.

Once again, the river crossing has changed somewhat. But it is now possible to either cross the river by the old log crossing on the riverbed itself or on the log, which was cleared of the usual debris and fallen logs from the Winter. Please be careful when crossing in this area; all hikers and bikers are liable for their own actions if anyone gets hurt. Although it is one of only two accessible routes to the townsite, it is always changing and it pays to be very careful.

Finally, the Forest Service has restarted the Townsite Host Program, and we are very thankful for that. It will help to prevent vandalism and will provide much needed interpretation for the many tourists that access the area. Volunteers will, once again, be able to use Forest Service cabin number 2 for staying overnight during their volunteer time. It will include use of the wood stove for heat, as well as the cooking stove. We have maintained and kept the buildings in very good condition for the Forest Service and now volunteers can appreciate these efforts as well. Here are the website links for signing up for that program and checking the calendar:

<https://darringtondistrictvolunteers.wordpress.com/monte-cristo-host-program/>

Password: sandwiches

Calendar:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1XLfLon8SemP06GJULtHtjbrpYiMTU886_4e2FH3ka5s/edit?pli=1&tab=t.0

In other news, there was a recent interview with TV station producer, Chris Anderson, of KBTC, in Tacoma. The interview centered on the history of both Monte Cristo and the MCPA. It should air either at the end of August or sometime in September. We're excited to see it and will let everyone know when it is scheduled.

A special thanks to our board of directors, as well as the members who are regulars showing up at the work parties. It seems that more has been accomplished this year so far than most years and that is something to really



be proud of in light of the fact that we are still transporting everything without being able to drive in. The restriction from driving has certainly been an ongoing issue, but it has not deterred our organization from succeeding with our purpose, that of preserving the history and maintaining Monte Cristo. I am always reminded of the late David Cameron when I see all the effort going into our work parties. He was always very methodical in his approach. Even though there were always

plenty of obstacles, he kept plugging away at his work as if nothing would get in the way. Thank you everyone who has put in the hard work these past few years to accomplish some amazing results.

Hope to see everyone at the next work party, Saturday, August 15. We meet at the usual time and place: 9 am, at Barlow Pass. Make sure to bring plenty of food and water, rain gear and work gloves along with your favorite tools. Board members have added a couple new tools to help with brushing both at the Townsite and inside the Barlow Pass gate; some new sickle bar attachments for the Stihl brush cutters. They work great and are more efficient.

Cheers everyone!

Kal Klass

VP for MCPA

Gleaning from the archives...this was originally published in the February 2003 Newsletter.

HISTORICAL NOTE

During the winter of 1892 and spring of 1893 the Everett & Monte Cristo Railway construction crews were filling, blasting, and digging their way through Robe Canyon and on up the South Fork Stillaguamish River toward Silverton. By the beginning of February the first bridge across the river above Granite Falls was completed, with work continuing on the second near Robe, where the line would cross back over to the south side and run along the base of Mt. Pilchuck, the present Grade Road. Track was being ballasted and telegraph line strung, despite over 3.5 feet of new snow on the 23rd.

Farther up, Henry Pennycok, who was in charge of the J.A. Paine construction camp located three miles below Barlow Pass, recorded a season of “remarkable snow” that winter. At his site 36.5 feet had fallen from last autumn through early May 1893, and he still had seven feet on the level, with 3.5 at Silverton. On January 19 he recorded a low temperature of –22 degrees F., with the camp snowed in until a total of nine feet fell. Twenty nine feet had come down since January 29, including 57.5 inches in four days of March. Snow weight broke bridge stringers, men traveled by snowshoes, skis, and sleighs to Silverton, while by comparison the Sauk valley to the east was comparatively snow free. One period of Chinook rains and wind developed, but that caused no further damage.

Meanwhile, railroad company headquarters were moved from Snohomish to downtown Everett’s new brick Wisconsin Building, and four trains were run daily between the cities when ice blocked river traffic between February 9 and 16. That schedule was attempted again in April, with a one-hour travel time, but apparently business did not warrant that number of cars, and they pulled back to three trains in May. On Monday, Wednesday, and Friday they offered service to Hartford, Granite Falls, and the construction “front” in Robe Canyon, along with operating the two work trains.

Brand new passenger cars arrived on the line November 30, 1892 and immediately were placed in service. These were described as “light and cheerful” inside, with quartered oak construction, cast steel wheels, and modern air brakes. Built by Barney & Smith, they were joined by an additional two new mail and express cars and a coach-observation car. Later, when the E&MC was sold off in sections to the Northern Pacific, they became part of that line’s roster. Coach #1 lasted in service until September 1935 after conversion to a drover’s car in 1930. Number 10 became a motor car trailer in 1927 and was dismantled three years later. Number 11 was retired in December 1929. Both mail and express cars, #20 and #21, became NP supply cars in 1923. The 60’ observation car was scrapped in February 1927. More details of their Northern Pacific classifications and numbers can be found in *The Everett & Monte Cristo Railway* by Daryl Jacobson, Phil Woodhouse, and Bill Petersen, Oso Publishing Company, Hamilton, MT, 2000.

Along with the new car roster, the Everett depot also was taking shape at the intersection of Pacific Avenue and Chestnut Street in Riverside, a 32’x44’ building (including platform) on the northeast corner and just east of the tracks running north from Lowell to the smelter at the northern tip of the Everett peninsula.

Dr. David Cameron



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**Next Work Party
Saturday August 15th 9am**

«FirstName» «LastName»
«Attn»
«Address1»
«City», «State» «PostalCode»