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# MCPA NEWSLETTER OCTOBER 2009

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## *Board Members*

President .....**Kal Klass** [klasstwin@gmail.com](mailto:klasstwin@gmail.com)  
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↳ **WEB ADDRESS:** <http://www.mcpa.us>

## Message From The Board

Fall greetings MCPA members! As many of you know, the Forest Service recently had a public meeting in Darrington to take questions and comments regarding the planned Hazmat cleanup at Monte Cristo. Plans are proceeding for placing a road along the old wagon road route and to intersect the County road at some point close to Haps Hill. This may be done in the late spring/summer of next year in 2010. **Please see included in this newsletter information and directions to our website for information on responding to this project. We need your responses to the Forest Service immediately if you want the MCPA and yourselves to have any input.**

Our last work Party of the year was on Saturday, October 17. We have removed the MCPA reader board by the clay slide for winter season. Water bars were made and checked (yes it was raining—perfect weather for working on water bars) on upper Dumas. The Town site host program has also been finished for the year and they will have a meeting at the Darrington Ranger Station on Saturday, October 24. They will have a potluck lunch to start at noon and the program will include shared pictures and a presentation from geologist, Jon Reidel who works for North Cascades National Park. All MCPA members are invited, especially if you bring food for the potluck. ☺

We have one more board meeting this year, on November 9. If you are interested in attending, please contact me through my email listed above.

I want to thank all those members and board members for helping out this year at work parties. Without our organization, the public would have very little to appreciate. The maintenance of the road and trails, continued process of printing and providing our brochures, etc. makes a tremendous difference to tourists enjoying the area. Not a day went by at work parties without the public thanking volunteers as they would hike and bike in on the road. We hope to stay very active as the government proceeds with their hazardous waste site cleanup of the area in the next couple years. Please make sure and send in your comments to the Forest Service regarding this issue. We will be sending out post cards in the winter for our social, to be sometime again in February. Have a wonderful fall and winter everyone !

Sincerely, Kal Klass, MCPA President

## **Cleanup at Monte Cristo**

At their public meeting in Darrington on September 28 Rod Lentz of the Forest Service regional office and Dustin Wasley, consulting engineer from Cascade Earth Sciences, distributed a summary of what they propose to do at Monte Cristo. You may go to our website [www.mcpa.us](http://www.mcpa.us) and read it by clicking on the link, "hazardous site cleanup info," then at the bottom of the page, click on, "USFS CERCLA/HAZMAT Cleanup Projects" .

Briefly, their goal is to reduce mining waste pollution from entering the creeks and river. Over the years these have collected at Monte Cristo Lake, where elements such as arsenic are ten times the amount found at Monte. (A lake cleanup project may come next.)

To do this, ten mines and four ore processing/transporting sites will be cleaned up. Waste tailings will be stored somewhere above the townsite (we hope) in a one-acre depository, with an impermeable sheet beneath and several feet of clean material above. They estimate a pile some five feet deep. A smaller amount of more dangerous waste will be removed to a disposal site east of the mountains.

Road access is required, with the 1890s wagon road route from Mowich to the top of Hap's Hill preferred. Near the town they are considering two options to reach the concentrator and townsite: use the current bridge into the railroad yard/parking area, build a new bridge up to Dumas Street, and use that right-of-way through town or follow the Mine to Market Road and cross Glacier Creek where the bridge used to be, near the concentrator. Other materials will be helicoptered out of the Jackson Wilderness Area from the Pride of the Woods mine on Glacier Creek and the Sidney on 76. The Rainy across Glacier Creek from the Pride/Mystery tramway terminal (the "collector") also will need road access.

Legal authority is granted by federal law. It overrides historical, archaeological, and Wilderness protections, allows crossing of private land, may require private landowners to pay for work on their land, eliminates any appeals process, and forbids any lawsuits until the project is completed. Paying for the estimated cost of four to five million dollars is anticipated to come from a lawsuit filed against the bankrupt ASARCO corporation, with the court ruling still incomplete and thus any starting date as well. Perhaps \$700,000 of the cost would be for the new road.

### **Some of Our Concerns**

Monte Cristo is a significant site in the history of Snohomish County and a very popular visitor destination. It also contains virtually undisturbed remnants of 19<sup>th</sup> century mining technology, from mines and tramways to terminals, bunkers, concentrators, and railway transportation. Few of these remain in the United States.

1. *Historical, archaeological, and cultural values must be protected.* We suggest inventorying and saving all artifacts for future study, understanding, and education as to how this 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century mining system worked. This inventory should be made available to the public and the artifacts stored locally under professional standards perhaps at the Granite Falls Museum, as the Forest Service has no museum or storage capacity. Interpretive sites, signage, and materials need to be created to educate visitors as to what was at each affected location, also at professional standards. The Forest Service should consider partnering with MCPA to create a central interpretive center on our three Dumas Street lots. There should be no damage to historical sites, buildings, and existing signage by haulage road construction or siting, and affected road/drainage ways need to be restored.

2. *Road access:* The Forest Service will make no commitments as to what happens to any new access road once the project is complete, therefore we urge new construction be to Forest Service Maintenance Level III, passable for passenger vehicles, but speed and comfort considerations are secondary. We urge building a new road parallel to but not on the historic wagon road grade, preserving the historic road remnants and staying above the flood plain. Crossing Glacier Creek from the Mine to Market Road is far more preferable than attempting to reopen Dumas Street with resulting damage to historical and private sites. No damage should be done to the exposed E&MC railway rails or other significant sites along the existing county road grade. The Forest Service also should complete its survey in the townsite to identify and exclude privately owned parcels from possible damage.

### **Your Comments Are Needed Now**

The Forest Service welcomes comments, and these should be made right away, before the project details are finalized. The more public input the better. Please write what you think and send your letter to **Peter Forbes, District Ranger, Darrington Ranger District, 1405 Emens Avenue N., Darrington, WA 98241**. We would appreciate receiving a copy of your letter as well (MCPA, PO Box 471, Everett, WA 98206). DO NOT DELAY!