
MCPA NEWSLETTER DECEMBER 2009

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Message From The Board



Holiday greetings everyone! Another year is ending as we get into the wet part of our season. Things have remained fairly stable at Monte Cristo over the clay slide and at other small slide areas along the County road. Our volunteers have maintained excellent access across the clay slide throughout the summer for hikers and bikers. Forest Service cabins 1, 2, and 3 have been improved by Town site hosts. The large cabin by '76 Creek has been partially dismantled and will continue to be dismantled next summer. The main outhouse on the road below the Monte Cristo Camp ground was pumped and cleaned out this summer. This was accomplished with the help of a helicopter crew going in and out quite a few times during the day of operation. Water bars were checked and improved on the road and upper Dumas Street areas during our last work party in October.

The HAZMAT cleanup plans for the area have proceeded with the work on testing now being finished. Plans are now being made for access and actual cleanup operations to begin next year. A public meeting was held in Darrington, with no deadline for feedback. But they received plenty of it. There are no plans by the Forest Service to maintain any road after the cleanup is finished so access into Monte Cristo after the cleanup is still a mystery to us all. We think the road will be maintained for at least a couple years during the cleanup. After that, it may be maintained for the monitoring of the cleanup but for how many years, we don't know. The MCPA will continue to maintain the old County road only for hiking and biking access as much as possible.

In March we will have our usual **Winter Social**. **It will be at the usual place, the Red Barn in Marysville, on March 6, to start at 5:30.** We will send out post cards with directions in February for everyone. Please mark your calendars now. We would love to have a good showing of our membership and it will be a potluck dinner as in years past. Our speaker will be Jon Riedel. He is a glaciologist and geomorphologist, tracking the changes in several glaciers throughout the Cascades. He works for North Cascades National Park.



We have continued to save and invest funds for use on the new interpretive site and for any unexpected road issues. We plan to start clearing the MCPA lots next summer and to start getting definite plans for what the interpretive site will look like. We are also encouraging the Forest Service to include interpretive plans as part of the Hazmat cleanup.

New officers will be selected for the MCPA board before our Annual Meeting next June. If anyone is interested in joining the board or doing part time volunteer work, please email me. It would be great to see some new faces volunteer. You only have to commit as much time as you are willing to take, whether that is one hour or a work party, etc.



This past year we owe a lot of gratitude to our board without whom we would not have an MCPA. Bill Rawlins has continued to help lead a lot of our work parties and to take care of all finances for the MCPA. He also takes care of all the keys and issues dealing with the gate. Our vice president, David Cameron and Louise Lindgren have continued their leadership and guidance to keep the MCPA in the spotlight as a well respected professional organization. They put in countless hours helping to maintain the Monte Cristo area. Ruth Danielson takes care of newsletters and our work party lunches. Doug Hammond has also been a continuing force to help maintain the area and volunteers his own time at all the work parties and at many other times on his own. Chuck Miller has developed almost a part time job by maintaining our large website and he is presently working on putting a new brochure on the computer for later copying as needed. This has been a huge task. Dean Nelson has been on the board as an advisor the last couple of years with much appreciation. Thank you everyone! And we hope to see you all at the social, March 6 in Marysville.

Sincerely, Kal Klass, MCPA President

Historical Note

In the last column I began quoting a report from Monte Cristo Resort owner Del Wilkie describing his solo trip by truck and skis to Monte on February 21, 1953. He sent it to Mt. Baker National Forest Supervisor H. Phil Brandner in Bellingham. At the end he added "Editor's note . . . The only talent or ability required to make a trip into Monte alone in the winter time is a strong back and a weak mind and I am blessed with both. P.S. I put the lock back on Barlow Cabin best I could."

Brandner replied in a letter dated the 27th of February, with a copy sent to Monte Cristo District Ranger Ed Anderson at Verlot. It is friendly, but chiding, and gives some insight into Brandner's opinion of him.

"Dear Del:

Thank you for your interesting report on your solo trip to Monte on February 21, 1953. I guess it's too late to hint around for an invitation for one of us to join you. You probably had reasons of your own for wanting to go solo – and unannounced at that.

The report on snow conditions, road conditions (blowdown, washouts, etc.), is very interesting and of considerable importance. Also, in spite of the lack of snow at lower elevations, there appears to be considerable up higher. Was the 5 feet at Monte quite consolidated or was it soft – loose – mushy? Your description of the washouts is rather sketchy, but since they are all on the County road above Barlow we don't need details. I note you changed name of one place – at least I never heard of Old Del Campo station. My guess is you refer to Weden Creek. By the number of blowdown trees it is clear you won't have to chop any more down to keep the road closed.

It's certainly interesting that a skier would run his truck into 3 feet of snow when it was obvious that the depth was increasing continually. Quite a feat to get out of there too. You deserve a medal of some sort.

I am sorry it was necessary for you to pry off the lock at Barlow. It must have been quite a job. You were told last fall you could put a dual hasp and lock arrangement on Barlow Cabin and use it at your convenience. You could also obtain a key on your way at any time at Verlot Ranger Station.

As a general thing, it is not desirable to have locks ripped off Forest Service cabins. Vandalism in mountain cabins (and resorts) is one of the serious hazards to mountain property owners. We have had no trouble. Now if some unauthorized person comes along at Barlow and sees the lock "jimmied" it is a suggestion and invitation to disregard locks. We don't like to have government locks disregarded. Now, I repeat that you are welcome to use Barlow Cabin at anytime. It was well known last fall that you might have occasion to do so, and lock arrangement was authorized, and bed rolls and provisions were put there for that purpose and a key is available enroute. I want to assure you that we want to cooperate with you in every way.

It is a pretty well recognized standard practice among mountain going folks to drop in at ranger stations and for their own benefit make known their itinerary when heading into back country." [To be continued next time.]

David A. Cameron, Ph.D.