

2013-2015

Larrabee State Park Trail Proposal

Presented by:

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Arlen Bogards - Washington Trails Association (<http://www.wta.org/>)

Objectives:

The mountain biking and hiking communities propose to increase the trail inventory of Larrabee State Park with the goal of creating a better user experience and increase revenues for the park. That would be achieved by:

- Improved trail connectivity
- Creating loops and destinations
- Spreading users out in the park
- Getting hikers/bikers off of Cleator Road
- Improve sustainability of existing trails
- Decrease user conflict via properly designed multi and single-use trails.
- Future trail-based events in Fall-Spring seasons utilizing the campground

The WMBC and WTA will provide the trail design expertise along with the volunteer power to get these projects completed at no cost to the park. Any new trail construction would be done by either one or both of the trail building groups.

Trail Design / Maintenance:

In order to mitigate environmental issues and to provide a better user experience, all trails will be designed and built to the IMBA or USFS standards for sustainability. Each trail build project would be completed before any new project would be started. Any stream crossings and wet zones will be avoided where ever possible, but bridging or culverts might be utilized.. All scouting will take place in the winter to identify potential water issues in advance and adjust routing accordingly. Any newly constructed trail will receive maintenance (at a minimum) annually.

<http://www.imba.com/resources/trail-building/designing-and-building-sustainable-trails>

<http://www.fs.fed.us/recreation/programs/trail-management/trail-fundamentals/>

Proposed Trail Plan:

Trail 1: Two Dollar Trail – Complete a full rebuild of the switchbacks at the exit where the trail connects to Cleator Road. These were built too steep (20+% grade) and too tight and continually become eroded. Additionally, the upper section near Fragrance Lake needs to be fixed as well by continuing the bench and connecting it further down the trail.

Status - Completed. The trail's exit at Cleator Road was re-routed and built by the WMBC. The trail's exit by Fragrance Lake was re-routed and built by WTA along with a full drainage and maintenance sweep of the trail.

Trail 2: The Rock Trail & Connector to the upper parking lot - The Rock trail is a new hiking trail currently in progress and being led by WTA and the Chuckanut Conservancy. The Rock Trail to parking connector needs to be completed to avoid future user conflict and to help the build process go easier. Approved length: 1.5 miles

Status: The staircase has been built by Russ Pfeiffer-Hoyt and the Chuckanut Conservancy. The WTA is working on the Rock Trail build currently. WTA and WMBC will flag the new connector route to the parking lot for Park approval.

Trail 3: Double Black Diamond Trail (DBD) – DBD was originally a fall line motorcycle trail and while corners and switchbacks were added by the mountain bike community 15 years ago, it has several badly eroded sections. We'd propose to re-route several of these unsustainable sections. DBD is currently .8 miles in length with 900 feet of vertical (21.3% overall grade), so it would be greatly extended and still maintain its rugged appeal. Any old sections of trail will need to be totally decommissioned with transplanting and re-vegetation work. Current trail length: .8 miles. Proposed length: 2 miles.

Status: The trail is routed and has been hiked with Amber Forest for approval.

Trail 4: Lower Double Black Diamond Extension – Create a new trail that starts below DBD on the Fragrance Lake Road and ends at the Interurban just north of the sewage retention ponds. The goal of this trail is to give mt. bikers an authorized top-to-bottom route down the mountain while dramatically reducing people riding the Fragrance Lake Trail (hiker only). Proposed length: 2.5 miles

Status: The trail has been routed and hiked with Amber Forest for approval.

Trail 5: Upper to Lower Ridge connector - This trail currently goes left off the Upper Ridge down to Cleator road. This trail exists because mt. bikers usually don't ride the middle section of the Ridge trail because of the many hike-a-bike sections. We propose a re-route where this trail will parallel the Ridge trail (running between the Ridge and Cleator Road) and then tie into the middle of the Lower Ridge Connector. Additionally, this makes a loop out of the Ridge trail and gets trail users off of Cleator Road. Proposed length: .75 miles

Status: This trail needs to be scouted, flagged and approved.

Trail 6: Upper Ridge / Parking Lot Connector – This short trail would ascend from the Cyrus Gates parking lot to the top of the mountain and then connect down to the Upper Ridge trail, thus getting trail users off of the road. Additionally, it would connect into the top of DBD and eliminate the eroded push-up trail that currently exists (that would be decommissioned).
Proposed Length: .2 mile

Status: This has been hiked, but needs to be flagged and walked with the Park Ranger.

Trail 7: Fragrance Lake to Rock Trail Connector – This trail would connect from the Fragrance Lake area to the newly constructed Rock Trail and the Cyrus Gates Parking lot. It would provide a good climbing trail for hikers, trail runners and mt. bikers and eliminate most of the use of Cleator road by giving users a connector to the Upper Ridge trail. Additionally, it would remove most user conflicts on DBD. Proposed length: 1.25 miles

Status: This has been hiked, but needs to be flagged and walked with the Park Ranger.

Trail 8: South Chuckanut Trail 1 (SCT 1)– This trail would descend from the Overlander trail at the south end of the park (skirting private property) and would include two short climbs in the middle before descending down to Burnout Road. It would then utilize 100 yards of Burnout Road to avoid a wet zone and then continue westward down towards Chuckanut Drive. Approximately 150 feet above the road, the trail would then head north paralleling Chuckanut Drive where it would cross Fire Creek and tie into the Clayton Beach Parking Lot. A bridge location has been identified across the creek and materials and labor would be provided by the WMBC. Additionally, there are three small creeks that need to be bridged in the middle section of this trail and we've identified cedar blowdown for those projects. Proposed length: 3.5 miles

Status: This trail is flagged for direction and final routing needs to be completed prior to walking with the Park Ranger.

Trail 9: South Chuckanut Loop – This trail would provide a loop off of the South Chuckanut Trail 1 that meanders around 2 knolls to the north of SCT 1. By following the contours around these knolls, the trail would not have much elevation gain/loss and would be a beautiful way to add mileage to the SCT 1. Proposed length: 1.25 miles

Status: This trail has been flagged for direction and final routing needs to be completed prior to walking with the Park Ranger.

Trail 10: Overlander Re-Route – This trail was a connector for mt. bikers and hikers for many years, but the private property it went through was clearcut a couple years ago. We propose to re-route the trail so it stays on Larrabee property and contours around the knoll to the East of where the trail exists today. Additionally, the current trail needs a culvert in the boggy saddle it routes through. Proposed length: .4 miles

Status: This would need to be scouted, flagged and approved by the Park Ranger.

Trail 11: South Chuckanut Trail 2 – This trail would split from the SCT 1 after it crosses Burnout Road. It would then head north down towards Chuckanut Drive and would merge into

the SCT1 just before it crosses Fire Creek. Additionally, there's a seasonal creek that could be culverted or bridged. There are good sightlines for vehicles, but we would install an exit gate forcing riders to walk their bike at the exit. Proposed length: .75 miles

Status: This trail has been flagged for direction and final routing needs to be completed prior to walking with the Park Ranger.

Trail 12: South Chuckanut Loop (SCL) to Lower DBD – This trail would head north off of the newly constructed SCL and drop down from the Southern knoll into a saddle where it would cross a creek, and then contour around a northern knoll before dropping west towards Fragrance Lake Road near the entrance to Lower DBD. Proposed length: 1.25 miles

Status: This trail has had some cursory hiking, but no real flagging or scouting.

Trail 13: Double Black Diamond to South Chuckanut Trail Connector – This trail would peel off (to the south) about 2/3 of the way down DBD and would traverse through a wide opening in the cliffband. Then, it would traverse along the contour of the hill until it connected into Lost Lake trail near the southern end of the park. There are a few small drainages it would need to cross and the actual connection into Lost Lake is to be determined. Proposed length: .7miles

Status: Other than the exit off of DBD, this trail has not been scouted or flagged yet.

Trail 14: East Lost Lake Trail: Re-route the trail out of the lower wet zones. Do a proper build-out of the user-built camping area to support overnight camping for multiple groups. Current length: 1.1 miles Proposed length: Same

Status: Park Manager McEvers is already working on this project.

Trail 15: Secret Squirrel Trail – Re-route several of the more unsustainable sections and significantly re-route the exit so it doesn't go onto private land. This would make Secret Squirrel end closer to Fragrance Lake trail, but routing will be tricky as it'll need to pass through two drainages and navigate to the interurban trail near a cliff band. Current length: .9 miles Proposed length: 1.3 miles

Status: Initial scouting is done. While technically possible, it's not determined if the re-route is necessary if the Lower DBD Extension gets built.

Trail 16: Two Dollar to Fragrance Lake Loop Trail - Lengthen and re-route the existing social trail that goes up from Fragrance Lake along the ridge between the lake and Cleator Road. This would make a beautiful loop out of the Two Dollar Trail with a nice mid-point at the lake for a swim or to fish. Proposed length: 1.75 miles

Status: This would need to be scouted, flagged and approved.

Other items:

EMS Plan: An EMS plan was created on Galbraith Mountain by Bellingham firefighter/paramedic Andrew Trimakas that includes 20+ checkpoint signs. Each checkpoint has a GPS coordinate that South Whatcom Fire Authority can easily identify where a lost or injured person is located and each location is mapped. Andrew has offered up his services and would be able to provide the manpower to get a similar system in place in the Chuckanuts. This would also need to be coordinated with Whatcom County Parks.

Trail Designer Biographies:

Eric Brown – Director of Advocacy, Whatcom Mountain bike Coalition

Eric regularly interfaces with private and public land managers regarding mountain bike access in the PNW. He began building jumps and trails when he was an elementary school kid riding BMX bikes in the woods. He received formal training during college while working for the USFS on seasonal trail crews. Eric has been designing and building trails for over a decade with an eye for sustainable trails that are fun for multiple ability levels. Many of the trails that he's helped design have become some of the most popular in the Pacific Northwest.

For the past 3 years, Eric was heavily involved in the creation of the Lake Whatcom Forest Park attending dozens of meetings and rallying the mountain bike community's support for the park. The newly formed park will have 8,800 acres on the East and West sides of Lake Whatcom and the WMBC will be working with Whatcom County Parks on the trail designs, routing and build out. Additionally, he often coordinates trail days with 50+ volunteers on Galbraith Mountain - where the WMBC has built and maintains 45+ miles of trail as well as trail days in the Chuckanuts.

Arlen Bogards – NW Regional Manager, Washington Trails Association

Arlen has been leading WTA work parties in the Bellingham and Mt. Baker areas for the past several years. After growing up in Lynden, he spent many years working in the construction field. He rediscovered the wonders of nature after making a career change that afforded him more time to wander the many trails in the North Cascades. A good friend introduced him to WTA and the rest is history. If out hiking off the Mt. Baker Highway, you might find him in one of his favorite haunts, Yellow Aster Butte.