

TWELFTH ANNUAL MERRILL LAKE CLEANUP

SATURDAY, MAY 10, 2017

By Warren Bieker

This year on Saturday, ~~April 15th~~, we will have the twelfth annual cleanup at Merrill Lake. The work should be similar to, but maybe not as difficult as, previous years because five members of CSF and I joined eight men from the DNR in November to do a fall cleanup project at the lake, which is something that's only been done a few times during the last eleven years. When I say "the work," it usually consists of raking leaves, spreading crushed gravel, clearing trails and paths, picking up a bit of litter if any can be found, cleaning out fire pits, clearing small culverts, a little light carpentry, and perhaps a little painting if it's necessary. We work rain or shine, and everyone knows what spring weather can be like in the foothills of the Cascade Mountains.

The morning begins when we drive to the Cougar Bar and Grill in beautiful downtown Cougar where we'll have breakfast at 8 AM. At a few minutes to 9, we drive up to the lake and work until about noon. The work is usually completed by then or maybe even earlier. Then we come home to nurse our blisters and to dry our clothes,.

I don't want to sugarcoat the effort. It has rained, snowed, and has been windy and cold at times, too. But often it's quite pleasant in terms of weather. There are usually about 25 to 30 CSF members and the adage that "many hands make light work" has never been more apparent than at a morning work party at Merrill Lake.

There's plenty of time to plan, but if you'd like to participate, please let me know by April 1st because I have to have an accurate head count for the restaurant folks who will be opening two hours early especially for us.

Now, for a few additional details: The Cougar Bar and Grill is under new ownership. They have been great to work with, and I hope that you'll enjoy the experience if you come to the breakfast and patronize them when you're in the area. When we are finished with the cleanup, the gate will remain open for the season, which is until November 15th. You will be able to stay and fish the lake when we are through with the work party, and you won't have to worry about being stuck behind a locked gate at the end of the day. This will begin the second year in CSF's more formal agreement with DNR in the Adopt-a-Site Program. All the hours we donate, including our travel time, are used to leverage grant monies for DNR's use at Merrill Lake and other projects. Be sure to sign the registration sheet when you are at the lake. During the regular season, a DISCOVER PASS is required, but as cleanup volunteers we get a free ride the day of the cleanup.

We have no monthly CSF meeting in March so if you were not able to sign the sign up sheet at the February meeting, please contact me at 360-687-5475, or by email at ljbieker@comcast.net. I do need an accurate count of those participating.