

Idler's Rest Guided Hike content (starting at meadow side)

- Start by asking who is visiting for the first time. Usually a few, but either way it's a great jumping off point to talk about the **purpose and vision** of the space as a natural space that the community can enjoy, place to connect with nature, research and educational opportunities, etc.
- **Formation of the preserve:** folks have been coming to Idler's Rest for over a century, and the preserve was formed thanks to the deep connection the community has to the space. When the landowner was thinking of selling, individuals, university departments, clubs, etc, came together to purchase the space with the intention of creating a preserve. With the help of the Nature Conservancy, the community rallied and purchased the land we know now as Idler's Rest Nature Preserve and guaranteed that generations to come would always have access to nature. PLT took over management in 2004 from TNC, who had been looking for a local management entity.
- Segue to **early settlement of the area**, as evidenced by old orchard. Several cabins used to stand in the meadow, Berrigan's as first known official deed holders
- **Orchard:** tasty apples, cherries and yellow plums are abundant in the fall – grab a bite on your hike!
- Notice **birdhouses** as we walk through, thanks to the Cub Scouts. Built with locally milled cedar, long-term service learning and habitat improvement project
- **Volunteers** make the trails and habitat what it is! Just weeks ago, all the brush you see along the sides of the trail were cleared, erosion control, improvements, etc. Invitation to volunteer or help out.
- **Nathaniel's railings and steps** as you enter the cedar grove, **history of scout involvement** at the preserve throughout the 1960's to today (Garrett's sign posts with updated guide coming VERY soon, split log bridges over wet spots, bench repair and reset at the big fallen tree).
- **Camp Kenjockey** held during the 1960's, hosted by Mrs. Berrigan. Word means "a spiritual place on the edge of the wood far from the multitude." Girls camp held throughout the 1960's with arts and crafts activities, cooking over a campfire, outdoor skills, orienteering, and close of each day found everyone in the clearing around the Council Circle fire, singing under the canopy of cedars.
- **Yoga in the Cedars** plug, sessions TBA this summer!
- **Idler's Rest Creek** flows through the preserve from it's headwaters higher on Moscow Mountain. 4.3 miles long, before dumping into Paradise Creek.
- **Stories of gold mining/panning** in the area around the stream. Is it true, who knows?!
- **Jim Manis memorial plaque** on the big rock outcropping, mounted in 1976. Jim was a Moscow HS student who had been killed in a car accident in 1975. He loved nature and loved Idler's Rest. The plaque honors his memory, and money from a memorial fund was used to develop trails and interpretive materials at the preserve.

- **Berrigan Cabin, Blue Mountain Music Festival, 1970's-1980's** social gathering history. Was a space to celebrate nature, music, unity, etc. Warren Hayman and his tenure at the cabin during the time.
- **Cedar grove:** always 10-15 degrees cooler, great way to beat the summer heat.
- **Bat mitzvah bridge project.** Special work party service project completed in 2014
- Original trail system through the area and up onto Moscow Mountain was called the “**rag trail**” for the strips of ladies’ petticoats that were used to mark the trail for early settlers, explorers and gold miners
- **At the junction to Highland Loop entrance, I always ask if participants are up for a super steep uphill climb, or if they would prefer to come down the steep section ahead. That will dictate whether we go left or right.**
- Trees along the right hand “Y” of the Highland Loop are where you can spot the **great horned owl** that is an IR fixture.
- Look for owl pellets under the ponderosa stand along the field. Sometimes I find one or two. Owl also hangs out in those trees.
- **Wild trumpet honeysuckle** is beautiful and blooming this time of year, chat about native plants and pollinators. Listen for hummingbirds where you see it!
- **Mountain Lady Slipper** end of blooming, but look for it along the root rot section of the Highland Loop. Several specimens on the hill
- **Root Rot** section good segue to forest succession and what is happening in that part of the preserve. Root rot is due to a soil fungus that attacks douglas fir trees in the NW. Once in the soil, the fungus will always be there. No way to get rid of it, but this allows for shrubby understory plants to thrive, and other conifers and deciduous trees will eventually repopulate the area.
- Segue to **forest recyclers: fungi, mushrooms, insects.** Dead trees are a critical part of forest ecosystem, process of recyclers breaking down the woody matter creates rich, new soil, provides shelter and habitat for animals and birds, food source for many creatures.
- **Animals of IR** can be talked about at any time! Share what we’ve captured on the game camera, including: deer, elk, moose, bear, turkey, coyote, birds, small mammals, grouse. Check out our FB page to see who’s passing through. Also, listen for the many busy birds this time of year, most likely to hear the crow, stellar blue jays, woodpecker, robins, wrens, and other small songbirds.
- **Conk mushrooms** on trees. Often sweating this time of year. Technically edible, but akin to chewing on a woody sponge in taste and texture. A little late, but miner’s lettuce might still be out in the shadier spots, and is an easily identifiable forest edible.
- **4 distinct plant communities** found in Idler’s Rest: ponderosa pine/snowberry, Douglas fir/ninebark, Western red cedar/mountain lover, Grand fir/mountain lover.

- Work in the **PLT mission** and our work/activities/events throughout the hike where it seems to fit and encourage hikers to learn more about us, follow our social channels, join the email list, etc.
- Plans for the **future of Idler's Rest**, including the completion of accessibility improvements, interpretive kiosk, new bridge over Idler's Rest creek at main cedar grove crossing, and additional trail and habitat improvements.