

Idler's Rest Nature Preserve to undergo \$100,000 in upgrades



Geoff Crimmins/Daily News

Lovina Englund, left, and Colin Priebe clear brush July 3 near the parking lot at Idler's Rest Nature Preserve north of Moscow. The Palouse Land Trust is expanding the parking lot, adding an ADA-accessible pit toilet and building a universal-access trail.

Project at base of Moscow Mountain will add parking, signage, vault toilet and improved access

By Garrett Cabeza
Daily News staff writer

More parking, better access, new signage and a toilet are expected to be available at Idler's Rest Nature Preserve northeast of Moscow this fall.

Palouse Land Trust Executive Director Lovina Englund said the first phase of the project includes parking lot improvements and vault toilet installation and the second

phase features the installation of a universal access trail from the parking lot to the Cedar Grove, and upgraded signage.

Englund said parking capacity will increase from about 12 vehicles to at least 20 by slightly expanding the lot and designating angled parking spaces. A handicapped-accessible space and an oversized vehicle space will be included.

She said the current parking situation is a bit of a "free-for-all" because there are no

marked spaces. Wooden parking bumpers will be installed as part of the parking lot improvement project, and the dirt lot will become gravel.

Englund said maintaining the preserve's integrity is the highest priority for those working on the project.

"We've designed the plans in such a way they won't impact (many) trees on

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the site so that we can make sure the feel of the nature preserve is maintained," she said. "I think that is really important to the community."

The wheelchair-accessible vault toilet, in which waste is held in an underground tank, will fill the restroom need at the preserve and will sit next to the parking lot.

Englund said several parents of young children told her the bathroom will make their Idler's Rest experience much more comfortable.

While much of the work will be completed by volunteers, a contractor will be hired to complete the universal access trail, Englund said.

The aggregate rock trail will allow those with physical limitations, such as Moscow's Morgan Stage, to access the Cedar Grove.

Stage is 60 and a quadriplegic. He has several memories playing in the grove as a child when his mother was there serving as a camp counselor. After a skiing accident in 1982, Stage said he has not been able to access the grove, which he described as extremely scenic and peaceful.

Stage said he reviewed the trust's \$43,000 grant application to the Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation. He had previously served on the department's review committees.

"I've missed the opportunity to get down in there and experience it," Stage said. "So when I heard they were proposing a project for it, I offered my assistance."

"We're super excited that we're going to be able to open up to more potential users, and especially users that might not have as equitable of access as we would have hoped for," Englund said.

The final pieces of the project include the installation of new interpretive signage, a new trail map and more trail signs. Two metal bicycle racks made by Moscow High School students also will be installed in the parking lot area, Englund said.

To fund the almost \$100,000 project, Englund said the trust will use the \$43,000 Idaho Parks and Recreation grant, a \$30,000 Thomas O. Brown Foundation grant and more than \$15,000 in community support it received.

"There's so much going on out there that makes my heart really excited," Englund said. "But a big part of it is just helping more members of our community getting access to being outside and removing those barriers that might otherwise prevent them from enjoying that space."

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