

STARTING THE SEASON WITH A LITTLE ADVENTURE



Kai Eiselein/Daily News

Palouse Land Trust community outreach coordinator Jaime Jovanovich-Walker leads a group of hikers into the cedar grove at Idler's Rest Nature Preserve on Tuesday during the trust's annual Summer Solstice Hike.

Many gather to cherish a community treasure

Palouse residents hike at Idler's Rest, celebrate summer solstice

By Olivia Heersink
Daily News staff writer

Several residents of the Palouse found their adventurous spirit Tuesday in the wilderness of the Idler's Rest Nature Preserve, about 6 miles northeast of Moscow, trading the comfort of their air-conditioned homes for the fresh, open landscape.

They gathered at 6:30 p.m. at the base of the 35-acre preserve, the descending sun shining through the overhanging foliage as they prepared for their hike to celebrate the summer solstice and to learn about the

history of the area, the local wildlife and resident plant communities.

The hike was sponsored by Palouse Land Trust and guided by Amy Trujillo, PLT executive director, and Jaime Jovanovich-Walker, PLT community outreach coordinator.

"There's no better way to celebrate the season than in the great outdoors," Trujillo said.

Given its surprisingly cool temperatures in the summertime, Trujillo said Idler's Rest has long been a haven for hikers and families, with some people estimating it was used as such in the early 1900s.

PLT had purchased the land in 2004 from the Nature Conservancy, who had purchased it in 1966 and turned it into the preserve.

Trujillo said the conservancy turned the land over to PLT because they believed the property could benefit from local management.

"Folks have been coming out here well before it was a preserve for years," Jovanovich-Walker said. "Our community is super committed to preserving natural spaces like this for



Kai Eiselein/Daily News

Kevin Roach and son Lochlan walk along a trail at Idler's Rest Nature Preserve on Tuesday during the Palouse Land Trust's annual Summer Solstice Hike.

Treasure

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today, for tomorrow, for a hundred years from now."

Jovanovich-Walker, a resident of Pullman, said she first interacted with the land over 11 years ago when she and her husband, Ed, had an inkling to do some local exploring. She accepted her position with PTL over a year and a half ago with no real understanding of the land trust and its management.

"I love this job, and I can't ever complain because this is my office," Jovanovich-Walker said as she lifted her arms toward the preserve. "It's been really special for me to have loved this place already and now be kind of in charge and helping manage it."

Jovanovich-Walker said Idler's Rest Creek flows through the peaceful cedar grove, and visitors can enjoy four distinct plant communities: ponderosa pine and snowberry, Douglas fir and ninebark, western red cedar and grand fir.

The idle environment also has more than five distinct trails. Jovanovich-Walker and Trujillo took more than 45 hikers through them. The smell of bug spray lingered in the air.

"I've never seen so many people here," Jovanovich-Walker exclaimed with a smile. "I can do the whole trail system in 30 minutes if I'm booking it, but that's exhausting and terrible."

She said the hike totaled 2 or 3 miles and lasted a little over an hour.

Jovanovich-Walker started on the meadow side, while Trujillo started through the cedar grove area — a space both say is their favorite part of the preserve.

Stephanie Rylee and her husband, Young, had never been to Idler's Rest before.

"We weren't quite sure where we were going on the way up, so we just kept driving," Rylee said. "And then here we were."

The Moscow resident said the couple was looking for a way to get out of the house and thought the hike seemed like the perfect opportunity to do so. Rylee said she believes it's important to escape the confines of the indoors as often as one can.

"Some people are just so cooped up in their homes, and they're afraid to go out and see what's around them," Rylee said. "They're homebodies; people just don't want to give nature a chance."

Jovanovich-Walker said this was the second time PTL had put on the summer hike, and that they also put on another hike for the winter solstice in December.

Trujillo said these hikes act as incentive to get more people out to Idler's Rest. Both women agreed that they wished more people knew about the land and all it has to offer.

"It's a really special place, and if they go out here, they'll see that instantly," Trujillo said. "The preserve is truly a treasure in the community."

Olivia Heersink can be reached at (208) 883-4633, or by email to editor@dnnews.com.