



DATE: May 10, 2025

TO: USFS Snoqualmie Ranger District

FROM: White River FPA

SUBJECT: 1st Quarter 2025 Report & Hours

Organizational Issues

Our group is experiencing its most significant change and reorganization since our inception in 2018. We are very excited about a substantial expansion in membership and activities.

On March 22, 2025, we held a community awareness and training session at the Greenwater Community Center. Thirty community members attended due to concerns about the local forest resources, the impending cuts to USFS staffing levels, and the reduction in firefighting capabilities. It was exciting to see so many people respond to the notice.

As a result, we set up in-person field training orientation sessions, during which new volunteers are taken out for three hours and shown what we do, how we do it, and the areas we monitor in cooperation with the USFS. These are one-on-one encounters where we can assist new volunteers with processes and guidelines that comply with the USFS volunteer program and our standards.

So far, we have trained or are currently training twelve new forest volunteers! This is a significant addition to our group, and we plan on completing more orientations in the coming month or so, just in time for the busy summer and fire season.

For several years, Todd asked us to expand our boundaries for the areas we monitor and keep USFS signs up at, but we never wanted to go further than we could sustain. We have learned that putting up signs that are not monitored can be worse than not putting them up at all. It currently takes almost three hours to check all the signs we have out, with time to replace or repair damaged or lost ones.

With new volunteers, we can now consider moving our frontier out a bit and consider more of Huckleberry Creek, the 7030 up from Whistle Creek, more of the uncovered 72 Road to the top and the legal shooting area, and some portions of SR 410 to MRNP. We will discuss this internally prior to making any decisions, but we will keep you informed. Over time, sustainability will be the main goal.

With decreases in USFS funding and potential cuts, we will engage in fundraising to help cover the costs of signs and supplies. As a first step, the Greenwater Firefighters Association provided us with a \$1,000 donation, most of which will be used for essential signs and supplies. We will also make those supplies available to the USFS personnel.

The Greenwater Fire Department has also invited us to their annual pancake breakfast, where we will have a donation table for our group.

On that note, we have re-linked the dormant Square donation account to our bank account so we can take donations now. We have a new volunteer who is creating a new website and donation button online, and we hope to have that up and running within a month or so. This will also allow people to join our group online as supporters. All field volunteers will undergo our orientation and training before forest work.

Ultimately, we hope to expand our group and activities while assisting the USFS and the public in having a safe and enjoyable forest experience. If our members can identify and report fires so that small ones can be extinguished before growing larger, it will be a vital part of our work. However, ensuring compliance with target shooting and effectively removing trash will remain a primary ongoing goal, as it always has been.



We also hope to have some group activities in the road, trail, camping, and shooting area remediation projects, something we have not done in a long time.

We will have a follow-up meeting and discussion for our new group members on May 27th at 5:30 PM at the Greenwater Community Center.

Forest Report

We replaced quite a few signs last quarter. Damage was higher than usual during January, February, and March. We are uncertain why this occurred, but we also noted many signs and posts were completely missing from the forest, rather than just being damaged or destroyed. We wonder if people are stealing the pressure-treated 4x4s due to their value, but we do not know for sure.

One issue we addressed was the hundreds of illegally placed Muckleshoot signs along SR 410 from Enumclaw. These were unlawfully located in the public right-of-way and created an unsightly mess for visitors along this Scenic Byway. We attempted to get the Muckleshoot Tribe to relocate them, but we were unsuccessful as they have ceased communication with local citizens or groups recently. We reported this to the Chief of the WSP, who then informed the regional head of the DOT. Within three days, most of the signs were moved onto their own lands, and the situation is 90% improved.



We also tried to address the issue of Muckleshoot security officers wearing law enforcement-type uniforms complete with badges, hats, and patches. They

reportedly stop citizens and demand identification and illegal police actions from other law enforcement agencies, but again, they would not engage with us. We have been informed that any of our volunteers going onto Muckleshoot lands, even to stop illegal shooting, pick up trash, or even to stop a forest fire, will be subject to prosecution. This makes no sense to us and is a new development, as we used to have an excellent cooperative relationship with them. The Muckleshoot security officers are not law enforcement officers and have no legal authority to stop, arrest, detain, or otherwise harass citizens. However, some of their reported activities raise concerns that they are exceeding their lawful authority, so these activities were also reported to the Chief of the WSP, who made a report to the County Sheriffs and the Western District of Washington, United States Department of Justice. The matter is now in their hands, but recently we have seen these security agents in civilian clothes, so changes might be occurring, but again, the Tribe has refused to communicate with us. Until they do, our volunteers are directed to keep off Muckleshoot lands for any reason.

There is a lot of graffiti that needs removal and we plan to address and remediate a lot of it this spring. Some is on concrete (pretty much everywhere) and some is on trees. Thanks to Conservation NW, we have tree camouflage paint that works very well and we are training volunteers on how to use it.



7013 Impacts and Discussion

Shooting at the 7013 was in 100% compliance for the last quarter. Thank you, thank you, thank you once again!

The closure of the 7013 area continues to be the foundation of significant change in the entire basin. Illegal shooting is way down everywhere. Shooting trash is way down. Other users are returning to the forest and areas that were once totally trashed by shooters are now clean camping and hiking areas. Not to say that there are not issues and serious problem areas, but this closure really made a difference, not to mention people, houses and cars not being hit by bullets these days from the 7013.

Additionally, the 7013 now has elk forage and smells nice. When this was open to target shooting, the area stank horribly of death as the shooters there always killed elk just to watch them die and left them there rotting. This has come to an end.

Just in case anyone has forgotten, here is what a couple of days worth of illegal, toxic, and exploding targets at the 7013 used to look like:



70 Pit Update

Although there are cleanups from time to time, very few shooters ever obey any rules, laws, or guidelines for safe and legal shooting. Our position remains that this area should be shut down and reopened when there is compliance with safety and common-sense behavior that is expected of every other user group in our national forests. Here are a couple of examples of toxic, exploding and illegal targets/trash:



Volunteer Hours

Current quarter volunteer hours for the WRFPA are: **196**

Total Hours for WRFPA since November 2018: **7,608**

Sign Inventory

We just ordered new signs at our own expense and will make them available to USFS personnel as needed

Issues Moving Forward

- WRFPA expansion.
- The new 410 keys work, but the lock at Boundary Creek is not compatible and needs to have the new one placed there so the new keys work. So we can dump trash with the new keys.
- Hats for new volunteers – we have some samples to review.
- Remediation at the 72 just up from the 70 pit.
- Remediation at Whistle Creek shooting areas.