

THIRTEENTH ANNUAL MERRILL LAKE CLEANUP
SATURDAY, MARCH 31
by Warren Bieker

Life is full of little surprises, isn't it? Some years we've had to change the date on the Merrill Lake Cleanup because of snow-closed roads, and last year we had to change the date because the water was too high. This year we have another little problem and that is we were not able to generate a list of volunteers at the general meeting because the meeting was cancelled.

A volunteer list is very important, and I'm asking each of you who is willing to help at the lake to contact me by phone or email so I can have an accurate count for those wanting to participate in the cleanup and to attend the no-host breakfast at the Cougar Bar and Grill. I also need to have your contact information in case we have to change the date of the cleanup.

The cleanup this year is scheduled for Saturday, March 31. For those who would like to have breakfast on the way to the lake, the good folks at the Cougar Bar and Grill have agreed to open early for us again this year at 8:00 AM. After breakfast we'll begin work at the lake at 9:00. They need to have an accurate count in order to better serve us, so please make sure you contact me at least by Saturday, March 24. My email is ljbieker@comcast.net and the phone is 360-687-5475. I will need to know your name, your email address or phone number, the number of people in your party, and how many will wish to join us for breakfast. We usually have about 25 to 30 men and women from CSF that volunteer to help.

The efforts of CSF over the years have resulted in many changes at the little park and boat launch at Merrill Lake, and our partnership with the Washington State Department of Natural Resources has proven to be beneficial to both organizations. Since we've been contributing our assistance, they have built a new mile-long interpretive hiking trail, built two improved restrooms, expanded the campsites, improved the day use area, and installed a potable water system for a campground host. Our help allows DNR to open the gate to the park a little earlier in the spring than they used to, and they keep it open later in the fall. Since Merrill Lake is the sole "FLY FISHING ONLY" lake in Southwest Washington, it is rightfully our home water.

DNR will provide necessary tools; however, if you wish to bring your favorite shovel, garden rake, leaf rake, loppers, or wheel barrow, please mark them with your name or a splotch of paint so they can be returned to you. Bringing leaf blowers has been very helpful. You should bring your rain gear, gloves, sturdy shoes, water, and maybe a lunch. We'll hope the rain gear will not be necessary, but you know what spring weather in the Cascade foothills can be like!

While the DISCOVER PASS is required at all other times at the park, it is NOT required for the workday. I hope to see you on Saturday, March 31, and please don't forget to sign up with me.