

2001-04-01 - Cleanup of Palisades Begins

Driving through Indian Canyon or along Rimrock you can see the activities of the logging operation by Steve Moe Logging. The Palisades organization has been monitoring these activities actively for a couple of years.

First, we saw the results of poorly planned random cutting of diseased pines in the park last year. Geiger Release folks did that logging. Logs were limbed and many were cut into unmarketable lengths and abandoned to the elements of decay where they were dropped. This was not a small lost resource but major amount of board feet.

Neighbors were able to interest Chuck Taggart in this project. He is a logger with an interest in rehabilitation and correct forest management. He met with the City of Spokane Parks and proposed the 5-acre demo cleanup and thinning that could salvage some of the lumber and bring the area into a state of conservancy. There was economic gain by both parties in doing this work and we citizens benefited by having the beetle infestation either stopped or retarded and wild fire hazard brought under better control.

All of us that ride, walk or bike the numerous trails have been witness to the severe destructive effects of ice storm, which created extreme potential for fire conditions and ripe medium for the spread of the endemic pine beetle. These opportunists love kicking a tree when it is down or better, shredding it when it is up. With the successful demo site, city parks were now in a position to move ahead with a plan to clean and thin the remainder of Palisades Park. This would involve selective logging, skidding out logs that are marketable to decks prior to hauling to the mills, trimming and piling, and shredding debris.

Palisades set up a meeting with Jim Flott of City Parks and their forestry consultant, Bill Barrigan, at a neighborhood gathering at Paul and Robin Valsvig's home. Neighbors had a lot of questions about the bidding process and are still confused as to why Taggart and other loggers in the St. Maries area were not included in the bid announcement.

All in all, the forests in Palisades Park are being changed in conformance to the contract. The thinning and removal of fuel on the floor of the forest is moving along. The large clusters of diseased trees are disappearing and hopefully this has been in time to avoid the spread and infestation into surrounding trees.

The Palisades organization wants to preserve the esthetic qualities of this magnificent park. Equestrians, hikers, and other nonmotorized users are interested in keeping trails open and safe as well as preserving the habitat and wildlife.

Continued involvement and communication are the tools that we need to bring this about