

Our City

With the exception of last Monday I have to say the week that was was a good one for our community. Monday may turnout okay in the end but it left me embarrassed and ashamed. I knew it could potentially be uncomfortable and in the end I ended up apologizing for something I didn't do; it was the least I could do.

My interest in creating an established trail system from Seagull Bay to Massacre Rocks State Park boat ramp is no secret and is sincere. I have been open about it from the beginning and have done my best to meet concerns and doubts along the way. Sometimes I have been successful and other times I have not. In an attempt to be open and inclusive I invited Tribal leaders from the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes to walk parts of the proposed trail that intersect their culturally sensitive grounds with me last week. For those of you who don't know where those are they include lands east side of the river across from Duck Point, or due west and to the south of the Neeley exit from the freeway.

It wouldn't have been so bad if folks would be content to keep their vehicles on the original established track; but no, some have to venture off road to wherever their 4-wheel drive or ATV will take them. Some folks have built huge fire pits and stacked wood in areas not designated for camping. Some leave empty cases of beer cans and bottles because they are further void of social conscience. I was embarrassed and ashamed. I don't know how it will turn out. The Tribal leaders seemed to be somewhat open to the idea of a single track trail transecting their cultural site originally but now I am not so optimistic. As some of you know the west side of the river around Duck Point and south of it was completely blocked off from motorized travel because people would not responsibly use and access the resource that is a culturally sensitive site to our Native American neighbors. I don't blame the Tribes one bit.

An actual Trail Committee meeting was held the following day, on Tuesday. It was positive and I believe productive as we determined that our initial funding efforts and the actual establishment of a trail will focus on the section from Seagull Bay to Lee Street Park over the next three to five years. Our potential partners in this effort will include Power County, the Bureau of Reclamation (BOR), the Union Pacific Railroad and a few private property owners. As the trail has been initially conceived it would exist almost exclusively within BOR management areas from Seagull Bay to Willow Bay. That said, it will border private property and just like the above case of Native American culturally sensitive grounds these private properties will need to be protected. Our efforts to work with the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes and other property owners and managers will continue along the entire route of the proposed trail. It will remain my goal that in some fashion or form I and other likeminded folks will be able to one day walk the entirety of the proposed 26 mile Ferry Hollow Trail without illegally trespassing or causing harm to anyone's property.

It has long been a goal of Councilwoman Kristen Jensen to get new playground equipment at Lee Street Park. That goal became one step closer last Wednesday when we opened and reviewed seven bids for the project. Three bids were selected by the committee led by Jensen to further review and have presented by the manufactures of the equipment later this month. We remain on track to have the new playground in place by summer vacation for the kids who will be using it. With some luck in the next few years a tunnel will also exist from Lee Street

Park under the Highway 39 bypass to the homes on Snowflake and Autumn Way making the new playground safely accessible to all wanting to use it and the skate and dog parks adjacent to it.

As we look for ways to provide more opportunities for our youth and community in general the Opportunity Community working group has set April 25th as their date for their annual Community gathering. Recall that the Opportunity Community is designed specifically to provide a hand up for those working to get out of poverty; we welcome any and all who wish to be a part of this effort. In that spirit over 80 freshmen have decided to garner donations of personal hygiene products, personal and household cleaning supplies and pet care products to donate to the Opportunity Community. Donations can be made at any of our five schools on February 24th and 25th. Your kids and grandkids will be asking for your help, please give it if you can.

Lastly, on Friday of last week Superintendent Jensen, Principal Hansen and I began working with the Idaho Workforce Development Council to establish internships and apprenticeships for any business that is inclined to take advantage of them. Our workforce pipeline is nonexistent for many businesses with high paying jobs to offer. Work with us to help change that. Contact Mr. Jensen or me to find out how. Together we can continue to make American Falls the best place to work, play and live.

Until next week...