



Issaquah Alps TRAILS CLUB

— EST. 1979 —

Dedicated to engaging the public to preserve, protect, and promote the land, wildlife, and trails of the Issaquah Alps, for future and present generations.

Newsletter of the Issaquah Alps Trails Club

THE ALPINER

April 2022

Signup For Our Online Public Lands Forum On May 16th

Enjoy the visual artistry of top local photographers and hear from local land and wildlife stewards about what is being done to manage the human impact on wildlife in the Alps.

[Monday, May 16th](#)



Upcoming Hikes and Events

[Saturday, April 30th](#) - Lake Tradition Plateau BioBlitz Hike

[Saturday, May 7th](#) - Native Plant Hike to De Leo Wall (Full, waitlist available)

[Saturday, May 14th](#) - High Point Logging History Hike (See accompanying article below)

[Monday, May 16th](#) - Public Lands Forum

Give Big 2022 Campaign is Underway



Donate

Bullitt Family Legacy on Squak Mtn.

Paul Winterstein - April 26, 2022

The recent passing of Harriet Stimson Bullitt reminded us of the iconic fireplace on Squak Mtn. and the gift of land in the heart of the Issaquah Alps made by her brother, Stimson Bullitt. Read more about this amazing woman and her family [here in the Seattle Times](#).

The Bullitt Cabin

The stone fireplace is the remnant of a 2-room vacation cabin built by Stimson Bullitt in 1952. Tragically, by the end of 1973, after Bullitt had given the land to the State, vandals had torn much of the cabin down, with only the fireplace standing still today.

Squak Mtn. State Park

Years after the cabin was built, Stimson Bullitt gave his children three choices on what to do with the property that the cabin sat on: build their own homes; have it developed; or give the property as a public park. They chose to give it as a park. Thus the 590 acres was deeded to the State for the purpose of "establishing a wilderness public park, the wilderness character of which shall include the absence of any vehicular use, whether powered or not, the absence of horses, the absence of any roads other than footpaths, and the absence of any man-made structures." This led to the establishment of Squak Mtn. State Park. In 1972, Harvey Manning called this gift "the greatest act of environmental benevolence in local history."

We honor the memory of the Bullitts by our unceasing efforts to protect these lands and to preserve those still in need of saving.



In remembrance of Harriet Stimson Bullitt

Acknowledgments

Thanks to Doug Simpson and Bill Longwell, two IATC icons themselves. Their writings from "Squak Mountain - An Island in the Sky" was the source of the historical details provided here.

A Little High Point History

Tom Anderson - April 19, 2022

What's so "high" about High Point? Many have wondered.

Well, you must think about travelling to High Point from Issaquah a hundred years ago by rail. The tracks left Issaquah in the vicinity of the Sunset on-ramp to I90 (Exit 18) at an elevation of about 200 feet. It's a steady climb from there to High Point (Exit 20) at 450 feet - about a 2% grade. It then flattens between High Point and Preston before heading downhill into the Raging River valley between Preston and Fall City. So, if you were on the train heading east out of town, you would have noticed that the locomotive was working hard on the climb, and then when the grade flattened out, the train picked up speed and you would say to yourself - "Oh, we must have made it to the high point." So there you go - "High Point." (Even though it's in the valley floor.)

And here is another question many have pondered: "Why does High Point even have a name - it's not even a wide spot in the road?" True enough today, but a hundred years ago it was a bustling little town with a shingle mill, sawmill, hotel, store, church, school, and many houses. What happened? In short, two things happened: depletion of trees and our insatiable appetite for roads. The High Point Mill Company cut the last tree it had the rights to cut on Tiger Mountain in 1928. The mill closed in 1929, but later reopened under new ownership, milling logs brought from elsewhere. So, the mill lingered on, but the heyday was over. Then, in 1957 the widening of Highway 10 necessitated the complete removal of the mill. The valley floor is narrow in that vicinity and a wide, four-lane road consumed most of it. The hotel survived and was converted to the Sparkling Brook service station. It, too, had to go when Highway 10 was replaced by Interstate 90 around 1975.

Today, the only non-residential building that remains from the mill era is the old schoolhouse, now used as a church. It was built in 1911 as a one-room schoolhouse. A second classroom was added as the community grew. With the depletion of the timber, the growth stopped, and then reversed. By the mid-1930s only one classroom was needed again. The High Point Mission Church at that point in time was looking for a new meeting place as they had been using a building owned by the mill which now was needed for other purposes. And so the tenure of the church in the school house began, using the room no longer needed by the school. In 1940 the High Point School District merged with the Issaquah School District, and the school was closed. The church bought the building, and it has been used for church purposes ever since (now known as the I-90 Community Church).



The old High Point schoolhouse, now a church. The bell tower, typical of schoolhouses of the day, remains.

The mill has disappeared, but what about the remnants of the logging operation on the slopes of Tiger Mountain? Is there anything left to be seen? Yes - some easy to see and some more subtle. The High Point Trail follows the route of a logging tram that was used to bring the logs down the mountain from the West Tiger Railroad grade, and numerous artifacts can be found along the trail. And the West Tiger Railroad grade is itself a logging artifact as its sole purpose was the transport of logs from elsewhere on West Tiger Mountain to the intersection with the logging tram (known as the "Wooden Pacific") that brought the logs down to the mill. That intersection is known as "Fred's Corner."

Fred's Corner was a 'T' intersection where the Tiger Mountain Trail (TMT) rose to intersect the West Tiger Railroad Grade Trail. I say "was" because a reroute of the TMT in 2018 eliminated the intersection at that particular point. The TMT intersection was moved a bit eastward. Fred's Corner is still marked with a diminutive sign on a maple tree, a useful waypoint on the TMT.

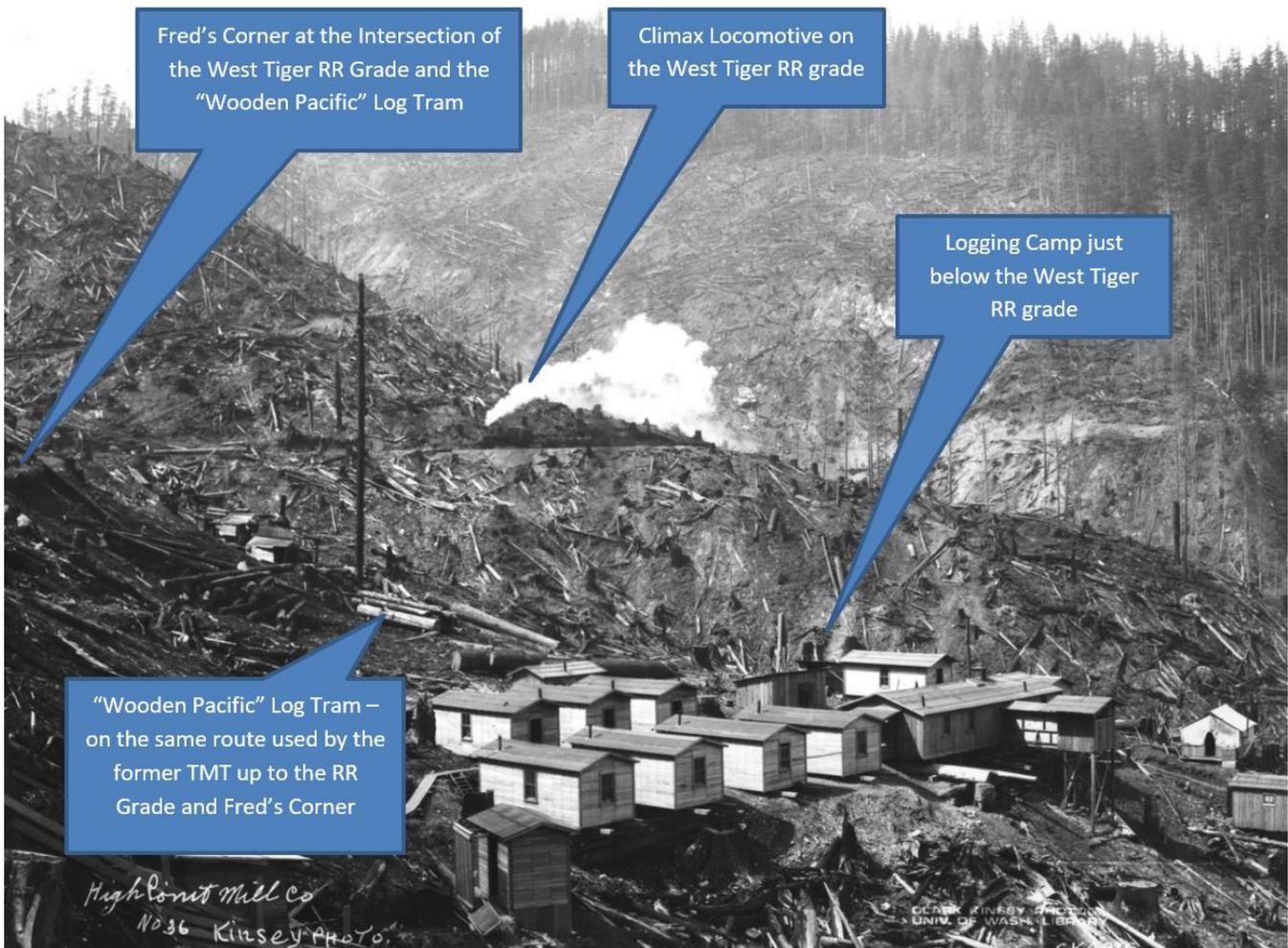
The location is the namesake of Fred Zeitler, a stalwart of the club during the construction of the TMT and for decades hence, a trail builder, hike leader and board member.

The signage looks a bit odd today with the trail sign facing downhill toward the now-defunct trail, but still, it provides useful guidance. Here is a view of the signage looking eastward with the West Tiger RR Grade/TMT in the background.



Fred's Corner on the Tiger Mountain Trail/West Tiger RR Grade.

If you could turn back the hands of time to 100 years ago, you would see a bustling logging operation of the High Point Mill Company. This particular spot marks the convergence of three key elements of the operation: a steam-driven railroad to convey logs to this point; a tram to lower the logs to the mill in the valley below; and a logging camp to house the workers. The following photo captures all that, and more:



Logging Camp of the High Point Mill Company, circa 1926 (University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections, C.Kinsey-1495)

If you would like to learn more, and you are reading this before May 14, you might enjoy the logging history hike we have on the schedule for Saturday, May 14, in which we will visit this site (and others) to discuss the logging operations of the High Point Mill Company. Here is a link to the event:

<https://www.issaquahalps.org/schedule/2022/3/31/high-point-logging-history-hike>

Trip Report: Geology Hike On Cougar Mtn.

Paul Winterstein - April 29, 2022

Ancient volcanic mud flows, 40 million year old river and swamp deposits that later turned into coal, and a fascinating rockfall that Harvey Manning once called a quarry--all of these and more were covered on a recent IATC hike on Cougar Mtn.

The Red Town trailhead at the edge of the Cougar Mtn. Regional Wildland Park is a place where many of IATC's interests converge. It's the jumping off place for miles of trails that weave through the forest and sloping terrain of the park. It sits just across Lakemont Blvd. from the 12-acre parcel of land that the Save Coal Creek conservation effort is working to protect from the bulldozer and shovel. And, as it turns out, it is an excellent place to meet for a hike to explore the geologic past and more recent mining history on Cougar Mtn. For local geologist and teacher Tom Doe, these last two attractions were his "hobby and a diversion during COVID." Fortunately for the 15 of us who gathered on this cool and overcast Saturday morning, Tom had parlayed his energies into a well-planned and fascinating 3-hour hiking tour.

Pre-Hike Geology and Mining History Presentation

Four days earlier, during an online Zoom meeting Tom gave a presentation on the geologic and mining history of the area, where we were introduced to the fascinating world of Lidar imagery and how it reveals the 12,000+ year-old glacial scrapings of the landscape that are difficult to detect when just walking the land. We also learned about the Tukwila, Renton, and Blakeley formations, the three primary rock units that make up Cougar Mtn., and how more recent folding, tilting, and faulting of the land has brought these three overlapping rock layers to the surface that are there to discover if you know what to look for. [[watch the recording](#)]

"Tom was an incredible source of knowledge", said Justin Roe, one of the hike participants. "I had a great time listening to him speak about something he is obviously so passionate about."

Hikers out of Red Town have a much easier time self-discovering the mining history of the area due to the many signs and markers placed about. During the presentation we learned that all the coal seams within Cougar Mtn. are found in the Renton formation, the 35-40 million year-old middle rock unit made of sandstone from deposits of ancient rivers, lakes, and swamps. Though mining activity ended decades ago, one of the coal seams makes its presence known because of a decades-old fire that still burns underground today. The last known flareup to reach the surface was about 15 years ago when some smoke and steam rose out of the ground.

The Route

At just under 3 miles long but taking the full 3 hours of allotted time due to the many stops, this wasn't a physically strenuous hike, but that's not the primary point of IATC "Hikes with a Purpose" such as this one. Instead, more emphasis is put on the route and the opportunities to learn along the way. On this day we started with a short excursion onto the Coal Creek Trail, then back across Lakemont Blvd. to the Bagley Seam Trail to the Red Town Trail to the Indian and Quarry trails, and back to the trailhead via the Red Town Trail. We finished with a short side trip up a small stream to view a narrow coal seam

visible in the streambed.

Harvey's Quarry

The oldest rock unit, the Tukwila was formed by ancient volcanic mud flow deposits, or lahars. This harder rock is more resistant to erosion than the sedimentary Renton formation that formed atop it before they were both tilted and thrust to the surface by tectonic forces. The main stem of Coal Creek flows south until it encounters this harder rock where it is forced to take a right turn and flow westerly along its edge and then more northerly on its way into Lake Washington. The De Leo Wall, the object of another IATC conservation effort is part of this same volcanic deposit. At the turnaround place for our hike, amid the jumble of large, moss and fern-covered sharp boulders, Tom laid out three possible explanations for this broken landscape that Harvey Manning had once conjectured was a quarry. Are they erratics, or large rocks deposited by retreating glaciers? Not likely. Are they debris leftover from a demolition company that once had practiced their craft against the abandoned concrete structures of former mine openings. Again, not likely. Instead, Tom believes that these massive rocks broke from the larger formation because of seismic activity. His argument was convincing and one that was fun to explore as some of us scrambled through and around and atop what felt like a natural playground.

Natures Way

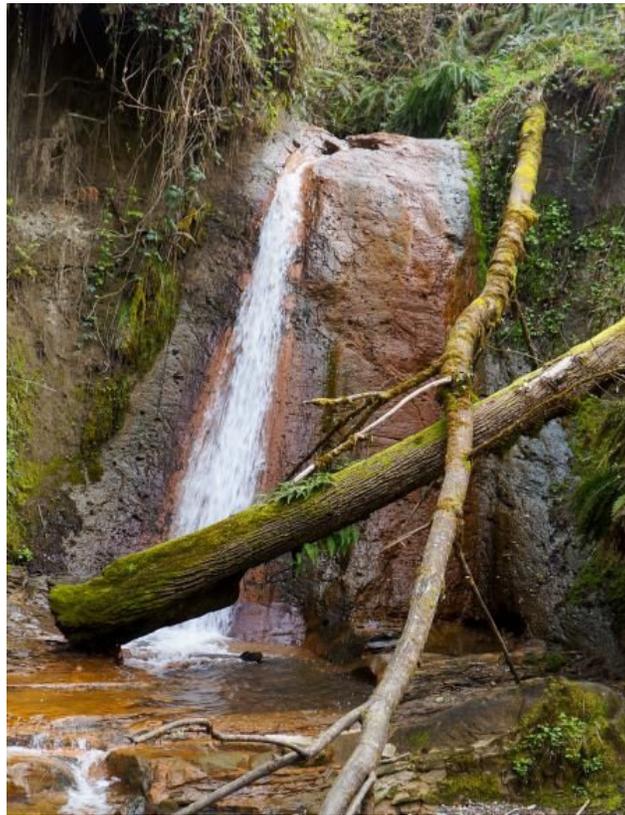
The final stop of the day offered a glimpse of what early explorers of the area would have seen more of before the mining operations broke ground. A lesser-used side trail just off the parking area led us over a granite glacial erratic, under a downed tree, and finally to a small, shallow stream. At about 2 feet wide and partially submerged, at first the dark material looked like just another decaying tree. But in fact, we were looking at the remains of countless trees and other plant material that once were buried thousands of feet underground where high pressure and millions of years turned it into coal. Too narrow of a seam to be economically viable for mining and because of the visionaries who labored to preserve this land as wilderness, this coal's fate instead will be determined by the power of a small stream and not the machinery of man.

"Our family thoroughly enjoyed the Geology Hike with Tom Doe. We regularly hike on Cougar Mountain, but **we saw things in a new way**", said Roseann Popa, who was accompanied on the hike by her husband and son. "We are looking forward to joining more Issaquah Alps Trails Club outings in the future!"

IATC is grateful to Tom Doe for volunteering his time and sharing his passion for geology and history to make this memorable hike possible. Thank you, Tom!



The professor Tom Doe (left) and his students.



North Fork Falls with glacial till on top and sedimentary rock at its base.



At the entrance to the Ford Slope mine.



Inspecting Harvey's "quarry", or Tom Doe's "seismogenic" rockfall



Exposed coal seam in the bed of a small stream

Survey: Hikes with A Purpose

Paul Winterstein - April 28, 2022

Our "Hikes with A Purpose" program is more than just about getting out and hitting the trails. We want to help people connect with the land and nurture the spirit of conservation. To join a hike is to connect with others and share in the wonder of discovery and the passion to protect.

So how can we make this program right for you?

Please take a moment to tell us what interests you by completing our short online survey. We look forward to hearing from you and seeing you on the trail!

[Launch Survey](#)

The survey will be open through May 31, 2022

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