



# 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

February 2023

News – Events – Hikes

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# Marchers and Rally Goers Energize Save Coal Creek

Melanie Dunn - February 24, 2023

*" I can't think of any effort along the Mountains to Sound Greenway with this kind of support that did not end with a great victory. This is not just a connection between Bellevue's biggest park and the County's biggest park - this is one of the most important connections along the whole Greenway from Ellensburg to Puget Sound. "*

*- David Kappler, IATC Co-Founder, describing the rally to Save Coal Creek*

## THE RALLY

On February 11<sup>th</sup>, over 120 people gathered at Newcastle Beach Park to show their support for Save Coal Creek. Many marched to the rally on a two-hour trek from Red Town Trailhead to Newcastle Beach Park, a path across trails and roads that allowed them to pass by the land they were advocating for and soak in the feeling of the still-standing forest land. As they marched, they crossed paths with large numbers of hikers curious to learn more about the cause, and cars who honked in support of the mission.



*Hikers gather at the Red Town Trailhead for the 6-mile march to Newcastle Beach Park*



*Marchers carried signs to the rally*

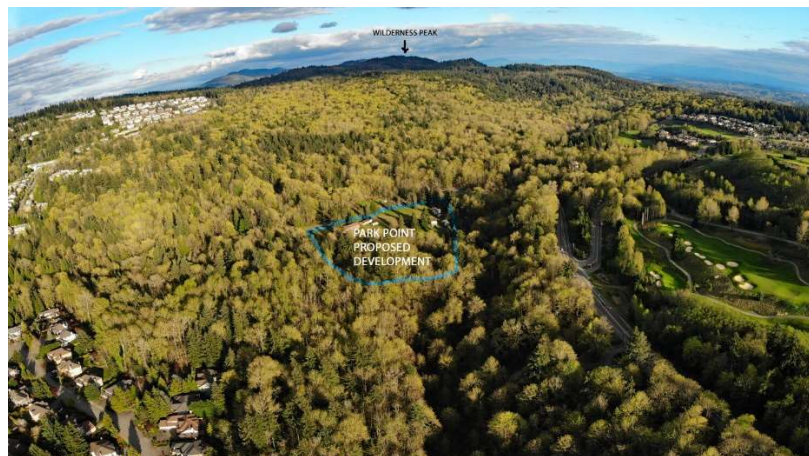
As a new member of the IATC this year, I was delighted to see such a range of people - hikers, history buffs, nature enthusiasts, salmon lovers, and more - eager to come together for a local cause. Rally-goers buzzed around signing the petition, posting messages of support on social media, and absorbing the history of the area through exhibits and mining artefacts by the Newcastle Historical Society.



*Trail runners dressed up to represent the local salmon. The author is second from the left.*

### THE HISTORY OF THIS ADVOCACY

For those - like me - who haven't been following the Save Coal Creek effort until recently, I'll share a brief history. The IATC established the Save Coal Creek advocacy campaign in 2016 on an urgent mission to preserve this unique 12-acre parcel of land within the Coal Creek wilderness area. If the parcel is not preserved, the developer intends to build 35 single-family homes on the land, with significant impacts on the land itself and the surrounding local wilderness.



*Cougar Mountain Regional Wildland Park with proposed development*

## THE MESSAGE OF THE DAY

Four speakers shared messages of optimism and urgency for saving the land: King County Councilmember **Claudia Balducci**, Mountains To Sound Greenway Trust representative **Doug McClelland**, Save Coal Creek Steering Committee Chair **Sally Lawrence**, and Issaquah Alps Trails Club Executive Director **Paul Winterstein**. Their messages were loud and clear:

- **This parcel of land is uniquely critical to the local ecosystem** : saving the land will preserve four different fish bearing streams and protect habitat and a critical wildlife corridor for deer, coyotes, bobcats, and bears;
- **We can prevent traffic**: while this area would benefit from more homes, they would be better located closer to transit, rather than increasing traffic on an already-dangerous roadway for commuters and pedestrians;
- **We can preserve history** and the connection between parks, by using the land for a trailhead interpretive facility;
- **We need the community voice to urge the City of Bellevue to purchase this critical 12-acre property from the developer.**



*Save Coal Creek supporters gathered at the rally*



*Sunlight and energy sparked the rally!*

## WHAT CAN YOU DO?

We still need your help! Here are the small ways you can help make a big impact towards saving coal creek:

- Use these [talking points](#), especially when communicating with the Hearing Examiner
- Send your comments to [hearingexaminer@bellevuewa.gov](mailto:hearingexaminer@bellevuewa.gov). All emails must be received by 3:00 PM, Thursday, March 2
- Attend the public hearing at 6:00 PM on Thursday, March 2nd:
  - o In-person at the Bellevue City Hall
  - o Online via [this link](#), using Passcode 448106 to join
  - o From a mobile phone or land line, call (253) 215-8752, webinar ID: 812 6190 7590, Passcode 448106
- Sign the [petition](#) opposing the Isola development. We have over 5,000 signatures and counting!
- Make a [donation](#) to help support legal costs and promotion of our cause
- Take a hike, take a photo and post it to our [Facebook page](#) or tag [@issaquah\\_alps\\_trails\\_club](#) on Instagram
- Review the Development Service's recommendation by visiting the City's [permit bulletin of Jan. 26th](#) and searching for "Park Pointe PUD"

# Women Making History - The Two Ruths

Tom Anderson - February 21, 2023

In celebration of Women's History Month (March) let's talk about two champions of the Issaquah Alps, both named Ruth.

## Ruth Kees

The first is Ruth Kees. She was a tireless advocate for the natural environment in and around Issaquah for nearly 50 years. She first came to the area in 1960 and lived on a 20-acre parcel on Tiger Mountain with her husband, Dan, until her death in 2009.

Kees took up the gauntlet on many environmental fronts but was particularly concerned about protecting the water quality in the Issaquah Creek drainage basin. She was visionary in her efforts to protect the Issaquah aquifer, not only for the fish and wildlife but as the source of potable water for the humans that call Issaquah their home. Indeed, this reporter's conversations with Kees taught me what an aquifer was. "Aquifer" wasn't in my vocabulary until I met and conversed with her. She was an advocate and an educator.

In 1981 Kees was honored with an environmental excellence award from the Washington State Ecological Association. She was recognized for leadership across multiple organizations, including Friends of Issaquah Creek, the No Dump Committee, the Watershed Committee, and the Tahoma-Raven Heights Study Committee. She got around.

Also of note, the signs seen at stream crossings reminding us that "This Salmon Spawning Stream is in Your Care" were designed by Kees and installed at 49 locations throughout the Issaquah basin area in 1982. These signs remain a legacy of the activism of this environmental stalwart (although the newer versions leave out the "Salmon Spawning" portion of the text).

In 1985 Kees formed the Issaquah Environmental Council to enlist others in local environmental causes. The IATC has partnered with that group from time to time on issues of common interest.

Recognizing her work, the City of Issaquah inducted her into the "Issaquah Hall of Fame" in 1991. Mayor Rowan Hinds cited her for "courageous and steadfast" pursuit of environmental excellence throughout the Issaquah area.



*Ruth Kees received the "Issaquah Hall of Fame" award from Mayor Rowan Hinds in 1991.  
(Courtesy the Issaquah History Museums - 2013.003.715)*

In 2003, the Washington State Department of Ecology awarded Kees the "Environmental Excellence Award." Ray Hellwig, the northwest regional director for the Department of Ecology, presented the award and said of Kees: "Ruth provides a role model for all citizens of our state on how they can contribute to public awareness and positively affect public policy on environmental issues. Her contribution to water resource and environmental protection is incalculable."

The award was presented at a celebration in the Pickering Barn, with more to come. The Issaquah City Council voted to name a small creek that flowed through her Tiger Mountain property "Kees Creek." And, with the blessings of the IATC, one of the most popular trails on the Tiger Mountain Tradition Plateau was renamed the "Ruth Kees Big Tree Trail."



*The legacy of Ruth Kees is remembered on the Tradition Plateau. (Photo by Thomas Anderson)*

Further, the City of Issaquah established the Ruth Kees Environmental Award for a Sustainable Community that same year. We are proud that club leaders have often been recipients of this award, including David Kappler (2006), Ken Konigsmark (2007), William Longwell, Jr. (2008), Harvey Manning (2009), and Ted Thomsen (2010).

You can learn more about this remarkable lady here:

<https://www.issaquahalps.org/articles/2019/3/8/remembering-ruth-kees-a-local-hero>

<https://www.issaquahreporter.com/news/searching-for-issaquah-residents-committed-to-ruth-kees-vision/>

## Ruth Ittner

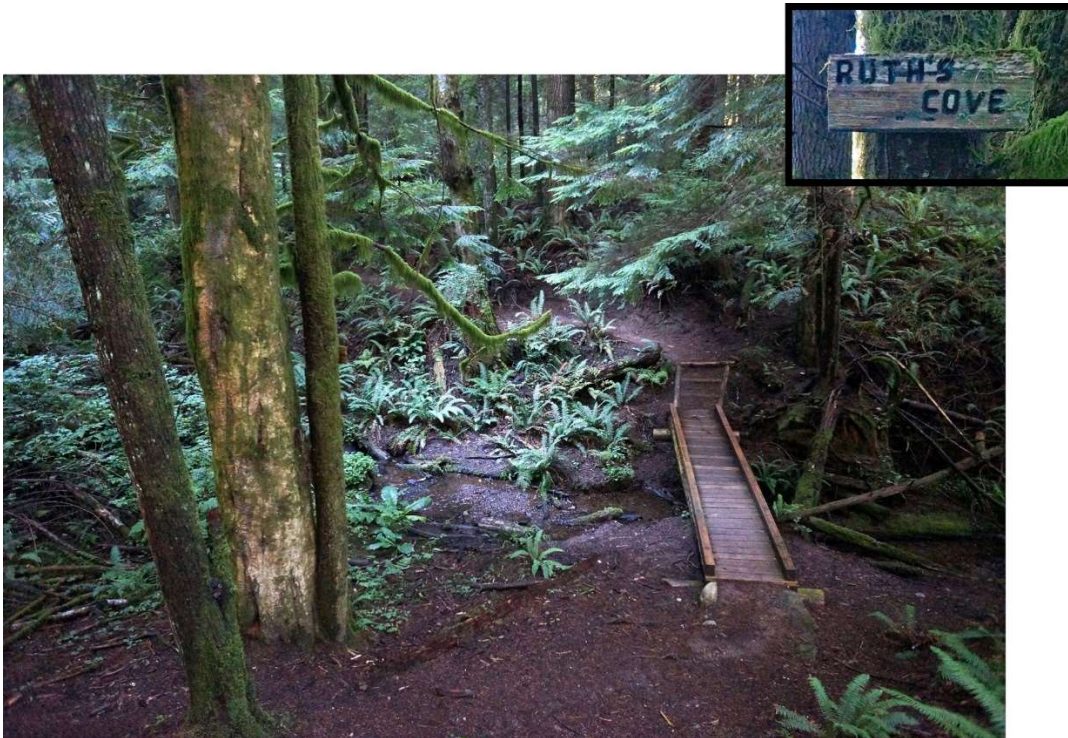
Next up is Ruth Ittner (rhymes with *vintrner*). She is most noted as the driving force behind the Iron Goat Trail that follows the Great Northern railway route through Stevens Pass. Her connection to the Issaquah Alps dates back to 1972 when she was chair of the Trails Advisory Committee of The Mountaineers. The committee, having enjoyed success in planning and building the Mount Si trail, wanted to make a similar trail on Tiger Mountain. And so the project was launched at a meeting in Ittner's home on May 10, 1972. The committee appointed Bill Longwell and Phil Hall, the only group members familiar with Tiger Mountain, to start contacting the landowners to get permission to proceed. Years later, Longwell would point to that date as the conceptual birth of the Tiger Mountain Trail.

Contacts were made -- the DNR was willing, but Weyerhaeuser was decidedly not willing. So the project went onto the back burner and simmered for four years while Ittner pursued every angle to win over someone in the Weyerhaeuser company. Finally, she found a sympathetic ear with Howard Millan, Public Affairs Forester with Weyerhaeuser (who happened to be a childhood scouting friend of Harvey Manning). He gave the project the green light.

Work on the trail commenced immediately, taking only six months to complete the first five miles! Ittner and Longwell conducted an inspection hike inviting officials from Weyerhaeuser, the DNR, and The Mountaineers. All went well, and work on the trail continued for the next few years, culminating in the grand opening of the Tiger Mountain Trail on October 17, 1979. (At the debut, the trail was 10.3 miles in length, later to be extended to the present 16-mile length.)

Ittner served not only as a lobbyist and organizer of the project but also got her hands dirty in the nitty-gritty process of building the trail. In the words of Bill Longwell, "She spent a multitude of days laying out and building the TMT." Because of her critical contributions to the trail, Longwell dubbed a particular spot along the TMT as "Ruth's Cove." It is a quiet hidden valley with an unnamed tributary to the High Point creek flowing under a quaint little bridge. An inviting spot to pause for a snack and enjoy the ambiance of the place. Some have described it as the most scenic spot on the TMT.





*Ruth's Cove on the Tiger Mountain Trail. Elevation 1650 ft, about a half mile SE from Murat's Bridge.  
(Photo by Thomas Anderson)*

Next time you visit Ruth's Cove, pause and think happy thoughts about her leadership and advocacy that brought you to this place.

You can learn more about this remarkable lady here:

<https://www.historylink.org/File/9379>

<https://www.wta.org/news/signpost/remembering-ruth-ittner>

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# Thank you, Paul, and welcome Kim

Anne Newcomb - February 24, 2023

Welcome, Kim Ngo!



In December, IATC was excited to bring on board our very first Program and Volunteer Coordinator, Kim Ngo. Kim brings a business and community partnership perspective to IATC with her experience as a venture capitalist, entrepreneur, and active parent volunteer. Growing up in Hawaii and spending the majority of her early adult life in major cities around the globe, Kim has a relatively new yet ever-growing appreciation for the outdoors. Following a career in international finance, she moved to the Pacific Northwest in 2011 to raise her family and has since explored nearly every trail in the Issaquah Alps on foot, with two wheels, and even strapped to snowshoes. One can often find Kim biking solo somewhere along the Mountains to Sound Greenway or walking with her teens on Grand Ridge Trail, as she often encourages her two athletes to join her on the trails to reinvigorate their sense of adventure and purpose. Kim is excited to share her passion for the outdoors and to introduce the greater community to the importance of preserving public lands for future generations as the IATC Program & Volunteer Coordinator.

Kim started out with a bang as she helped organize the very successful Save Coal Creek March and Rally. Day-to-day, she is overseeing our hiking and restoration programs. We're excited that she's been able to ramp up so quickly, and look forward to seeing all the great work Kim will be doing for IATC and the Issaquah Alps.

## Paul Winterstein Leaving IATC Executive Director Role



Over the past year, Paul Winterstein has been a huge asset to the IATC, helping us as we work to professionalize our organization. Crucially, he has helped with starting up our new advocacy committee, improving our backend systems, and developing a concrete and tangible work plan for 2023. Paul has also rolled up his sleeves and gotten involved in many of IATC's advocacy projects; in particular, he has been a great asset to Sally Lawrence and the Save Coal Creek advocates, sharing his experience as a former Issaquah City Councilmember and providing guidance on the appropriate messaging and strategy for the campaign. Paul also took on the thankless work of improving IATC's backend CRM systems with automations and integrations, which will help future executive directors be more effective.

"I especially appreciate all of Paul's guidance in helping get the new advocacy committee set up, helping us develop processes, and helping us develop a detailed work plan. The work plan provides structure for our year, will help hold us accountable to achieving our goals, and will help us as we professionalize the club.

I look forward to seeing what you do next! We certainly need your civic leadership, deep knowledge and expertise, and passion in our community here in Issaquah and beyond. Regardless of what you end up doing next, I hope we can have you volunteer as an on-course race photographer for "Snake to Lake" later this year - same spot in the creek bed next to the West Access Trail on Squak."

- Kelly Jiang, IATC Vice President and Advocacy Committee Chair

"I enjoyed working with Paul to create the 2022 Wildlife Forum and especially loved his messaging, my favorite being the Curious as a Raccoon. Paul is leaving IATC in an even better place than he found us, and I'm very grateful to have worked with him for the past year. He is dedicated to seeing the Save Coal Creek project through, and we are very happy to have him continuing with advocacy for the Issaquah Alps in a volunteer role."

- Anne Newcomb, IATC President

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Anne Newcomb will be filling in as interim ED until a full-time Executive Director is hired.

# IATC President Update and Board Transitions

Anne Newcomb - February 24, 2023

## Update from the President

The IATC has had some big transitions over the past few months!

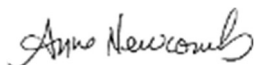
In January 2023 I started my 3-year term as the IATC President and Kelly Jiang was elected Vice President in addition to chairing the revitalized Advocacy Committee. Kelly and I are partnering closely to lead the organization by building on the success of our previous President David Dunphy. During his term, David helped realize Kirt Leonard's vision of bringing on a younger generation to the Board and a youthful spirit to IATC! Despite challenges from the COVID-19 pandemic, David assured the IATC continued to grow and oversaw the creation of our [2021-2026 Strategic Plan](#) to highlight one major accomplishment. David continues to be an active Board member and serves on the Advocacy Committee.

Ryan McIrvin joined the board in summer 2022. He brings a wealth of experience as a current Renton City Councilmember and government relations professional. Haley Hayes left the Board in February and James Li joined the Board and was elected as the IATC's new Treasurer.

In January, longtime board members Kirt Lenard and Tom Anderson both cycled off of the board of directors. Kirt is continuing his volunteer involvement as a member of the Governance Committee, while Tom continues to serve on the Communications Committee and is working on the finishing touches for the IATC history book. Thank you both for your years of contributions on the Board, and we are very fortunate to have you continue your involvement in the IATC as volunteers.

I am really excited about what we have planned for 2023 and beyond and look forward to sharing and celebrating our accomplishments with the IATC community!

Anne Newcomb



IATC President

## Retiring Board Members

Kirt Lenard



*Kirt with his framed mosaic artwork "Thank You" gift*

Kirt has been a very active board member with IATC since 2014 and even served as both Board President and Treasurer 2016-2018. In this [first quarter 2018 Alpiner article](#) Kirt shares his vision of "continuing the IATC mission of preserving and protecting the green spaces within the Issaquah Alps, planning for the next 40 years by bringing the operations of the club into the digital age by updating our online presence and making sure we communicate and share our work with our members and the general public in ways that effectively reach the broadest possible audience. Even more importantly, it means reaching out across generations and into a wider, more diverse cross section of groups within our community. This is an important and difficult challenge, but one that will ensure our mission continues so that future generations can enjoy the benefits of living in harmony with our natural environment." IATC has made great progress towards achieving this vision and we are so grateful to Kirt recognizing what was needed to create a future where we can continue to work together to preserve, protect, and promote the land, wildlife, and trails of the Issaquah Alps for present and future generations.



*Tom with his framed mosaic artwork "Thank You" gift*

Tom has been a vital member of the IATC board of directors since 2015. IATC has been lucky to have Tom as our dedicated historian and photographer. The Issaquah Alps Trails Club has a rich 40-year history, much of which is captured in the [Alpiner Archive](#) Tom created. Thanks Tom for taking the time to archive IATC history and making it easy to access and read! Tom is also in the process of creating the IATC history book, called *40 years with IATC*, which will be available soon. Tom also documented and helped plan the big celebration of [IATC's 40th Anniversary](#) in 2019! You have most likely enjoyed one of Tom's hikes, Alpiner articles, social media posts, and/or [Sasquatch appearances](#). We are grateful for Tom's continued involvement with the communications committee, even as his term on the Board of Directors has come to an end.

## New Board Members

James Li



*James and Nico*

James is the IATC Treasurer and is a Senior Technical Product Manager at Amazon Prime and has a background in finance and accounting, holding a CPA and Masters in Accounting. James is an active trail runner as a new resident of Issaquah. James is an advocate for equity and access on the trails and feels public goods should be shared and accessed equitably amongst all. You may see James out running on the trails with his newly adopted husky, Nico, who has been loving the snow in the Issaquah Alps!



*Ryan mid-fish in blue shirt*

Ryan is currently the Assistant Director, Government and Community Relations for University of Washington Bothell. As a Renton City Councilmember, Ryan has worked tirelessly to expand housing affordability, while preserving open space, and brings that background and experience to the IATC board. Ryan advocated for funding to support the restoration of salmon habitat while serving on the WRIA 8 Salmon Recovery Council and Cedar River Council, advocated to save DeLeo Wall on Cougar Mountain from logging/development, and previously served on the King Conservation District Advisory Committee. He supported efforts to expand May Creek Trail and has consistently advocated for new trail connections needed to complete our regional trails network through the Leafline Trails Coalition. Ryan is a proud father of two daughters who are budding IATC advocates - they've even made an appearance at several board meetings and the Save Coal Creek rally!



# Events



## Bellevue City Council Meeting

Monday, Feb. 27 at 6:00 PM at Council Chambers & Online

The last Council meeting before the Public Hearing on Mar. 2. Some of us will be there to urge Bellevue to **Save Coal Creek**. Join in person or online to show your support.



## Public Hearing on Development Permit

Thursday, Mar. 2 at 6:00 PM at Council Chambers & Online

The Bellevue Hearing Examiner will take public comments about his decision to approve the Park Pointe PUD (the subject of **Save Coal Creek**).



## Restoration of Bernsten Park Continues

Saturday, Mar. 18 from 9:00 AM – Noon

Grab your work gloves and join us and Green Issaquah in continuing efforts to restore Berntsen Park to its natural state of native plants and no invasives along Issaquah Creek



## Partner Event: Sustainability Fair

Sunday, Apr. 16 from 10:00 AM – 2:00 PM

Save the date! Learn, be inspired and engage with sustainability initiatives at the City of Issaquah's inaugural Fair.



## Trail Work Parties on Tiger, Cougar, and (NEW!) Taylor Mtns.

Join others from the IATC community and WTA to maintain and build new trails on Tiger, Cougar, and Taylor mountains now through March.





### Talus Rocks Hike – Fast & Fun!

Saturday, Mar. 12 from 2:00 – 5:00 PM

Join Mark Griffith, an active member of IATC, on a fast-paced afternoon hike up West Tiger Mountain to Talus Rocks.



### Hike Series: Big Trees of the Issaquah Alps

Saturday, Mar. 25 from 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Join Paul Winterstein for the first in a series of hikes to learn about Big Trees, starting with an isolated Douglas Fir on Squak Mtn. Future dates/locations TBD.



### Native Plant Identification Hike to De Leo Wall – Afternoon Hike

Saturday, May 6 from 2:00 – 5:00 PM

Join native plant steward Franja Bryant on the afternoon hike to De Leo Wall and along the way learn to identify native plants.



### Forest Health Hike – E. Sunset Way

Sunday, May 14 from 10:00 AM – 12:30 PM

Join the IATC and Dan Hintz from Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust for a morning of plant identification and forest ecology education.



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# The Apparatus

## Club Founder

Harvey Manning

## Executive Director

Paul Winterstein ([exec@issaquahalps.org](mailto:exec@issaquahalps.org))

## President

Anne Newcomb ([president@issaquahalps.org](mailto:president@issaquahalps.org))

## Vice President

Kelly Jiang

## Vice President of Advocacy

David Kappler ([advocacy@issaquahalps.org](mailto:advocacy@issaquahalps.org))

## Program and Volunteer Coordinator

Kim Ngo

## Board of Directors

David Dunphy

Kaytlyn Gerbin

Mark Griffith

Suzanne Kagen (Secretary)

James Li (Treasurer)

Ryan McIrvine

Gaurav Sharma

Nate Smith

## Issaquah Alps Trails Club

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