



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

July 2023

News – Events – Hikes



Ken Konigsmark inducted into Issaquah Hall of Fame

IATC Staff - July 3, 2023

Longtime IATC member Ken Konigsmark was named to the Hall of Fame, the City of Issaquah's highest honor, in late May of this year. As the 2007 recipient of the Ruth Kees Environmental Award, Ken has been a tireless advocate for natural spaces for many years. Doug McClelland of Mountains to Sound Greenway and IATC's David Kappler were both happy to recommend him for this honor and have shared their words below.



Photo courtesy the City of Issaquah.

Words by David Kappler, IATC VP of Advocacy -

I will always remember the evening that Ken Konigsmark came to an Issaquah Alps Board Meeting to relate his concerns about what was happening on Squak Mountain State Park. He related his run-ins with people doing out-of-control illegal activities in the state park not far from his home on Squak. Bill Longwell and others had shown an interest in Squak, and we were very thankful for the large gift of land that Stimson Bullitt had given to the state park system, but acquisition issues with Cougar and Tiger had diverted us from keeping up with protecting lands that had already been acquired.

After Ken told us of some of his interactions with four-wheel drive operators cutting down trees, stealing wood, reckless shooting and tearing up the ground, we were more worried about his safety than damage to the park. That began a decades-long partnership with Ken and the IATC that expanded well beyond Squak to being a critical force in the actual creation of the pretty crazy idea of a Mountains to Sound Greenway from Elliot Bay to Ellensburg.

The concept of "urban villages" in or near Issaquah preceded Ken's involvement with land use planning.

The successful implementation of those plans was something Ken was very much involved with. Ken is an on the ground type of guy not relying on pretty architect drawings denoting green and protected steep slopes, creeks, wetlands and the like. He knew the ground in Talus and Issaquah Highlands and made sure real protection and enhancement of critical areas was a reality, and not just a pretty picture in an ignored plan.

Ken is not just an Issaquah Hero, but a Hero for the whole Greenway from Mountains to Sound. We and the region owe him a great deal for not only his vision, but for making sure that vision was and is implemented.



Ken at the 20th-anniversary greenway march. Courtesy of the Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust

Words by Doug McClelland, former MTSG President -

I am honored to be able to recommend Ken Konigsmark as the next City of Issaquah's Hall of Fame Recipient. I am so proud of knowing and working with Ken for over thirty years.

Ken has dedicated his life and passion to the community in conservation, recreation, land use, and advancing social issues in Issaquah and surrounding lands. From becoming President of the Issaquah Alps Trails Club, to working for the Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust for ten years as a loaned Boeing Executive, to leading efforts to conserve open space surrounding Issaquah to rolling up his sleeves at his church to help long-term planning and land use.

Ken volunteered for years on the Conservation Futures Committee for King County. He has helped local politicians understand and support rural issues. He researches an issue, finds solutions, and works tirelessly to bring people together to make Issaquah a better place to live for all.

Ken is a graduate of West Point, retired in the reserves as a Military Intelligence officer, he worked at

Boeing for a career, and then spent almost all of his free time in land conservation and community issues. Ken is a soldier; you ask him to complete a task and he gets it done! He works hard, cares about his community and most of all is deserving of recognition he never asks for... let's make Ken Konigsmark Issaquah's Next Hall of Fame Recipient!

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And more accolades for Ken from the archives:



BY GREG FARRAR

Ruth Kees (left) congratulates Ken Konigsmark after he received an environmental award named in Kees honor.

Konigsmark honored with environmental award

BY JON SAVELLE

Ken Konigsmark is the 2007 recipient of the Ruth Kees Award, given by the city in recognition of environmental stewardship.

Mayor Ava Frisinger presented the award at the April 16 meeting of the City Council, where she praised Konigsmark for his many years of environmental advocacy and for his collaborative approach to problem solving.

"He can tell you something you don't particularly want to hear, but you are grateful for that knowledge," she said.

Frisinger noted that Konigsmark has contributed to the protection of more than

20,000 acres of wildlands in the Issaquah Alps, and 10 times that amount in the Mountains to Sound Greenway along Interstate 90. She also observed that, as a member of the city's Economic Vitality Task Force, Konigsmark made clear the connection between environmental protection and economic health.

The recognition of Konigsmark was applauded by Kees herself, whose decades of environmental advocacy inspired creation of the award.

"I couldn't approve more thoroughly of a candidate than Ken Konigsmark," she said at the meeting.

Konigsmark returned the senti-

ment, saying he was honored to have his name associated with hers.

"She's a living legend," he said. Aside from his environmental advocacy, Konigsmark is known for his cooperative way of working with disparate groups and interests — something of which he is proud.

"If I go way back to when I first got involved with these things, it was more confrontational," Konigsmark said.

Now, the process is much more collaborative and inclusive, he said, and more effective, too.

Reporter Jon Savelle can be reached at 392-6434, ext. 234, or at jsavelle@issapress.com.

Issaquah Press, April 25, 2007.

Getting to the root of Western Red Cedar dieback with Forest Health Watch

Anne Newcomb - July 3, 2023

Ever since Dr. Joey Hulbert taught me how to identify the health of Western Red Cedars, I can't help but look up. Sadly, as I do, I am seeing more and more dead Western Red Cedar tops.



My home is nestled in the woods on the northeast side of a hill surrounded by Western Red Cedar trees. At first I thought because of the positioning on the hill that the trees would be cool enough to

continue to thrive. But in 2022, a number of treetops started to turn brown. As I am sure you recall, we had a very unusual heat dome in June of 2021 which broke temperature records - Issaquah Highlands reached a scorching 116 degrees Fahrenheit while the Issaquah Valley reached 113 degrees and Maple Valley 118. In 2022, Western Red Cedar brown tops began to appear in my cool wooded neighborhood although others have been noticing it for around 10 years all around the PNW.



Luckily, scientists like Dr. Joey Hulbert and [Forest Health Watch](#) are looking for ways we can help Western Red Cedars survive climate change. Once trees are stressed (by things like heatdome), they can become more vulnerable, so scientists are looking for more than one possible cause of dieback. IATC has had the pleasure of collaborating with Joey since we met in 2021 and last week he was back sharing knowledge and updates on his research! If you missed his Forest Health Watch [Western Red Cedar webinar](#) you can still [view it here](#). One of Joey's current focuses is looking for possible soil pathogens that might be contributing to dieback. We can thank IATC community scientists both out on their own and on IATC-led hikes for collecting many of the soil samples used in the ongoing research.



In addition to the webinar, Joey also joined us on a hike and soils collection led by David Kappler! Here is David's hike report:

We had a nice group of 9 soil samplers and students of cedar tree health on a Friday evening hike on the Tradition Lake Plateau. We started with a look from the East Sunset Trailhead across Sunset to see some cedar trees with obvious dieback. Something I failed to notice before and of concern since I can remember when those trees were planted when the Sunset Interchange was greatly expanded and these trees were planted in a designated mitigation area for loss of trees on the north side of I-90. Once up on the Plateau we saw several large cedars in obvious ill health on the south edge of the power line corridor. We chose to not brave the blackberry jungle to do soil sampling, but did take samples on our return using the Wetland Tree west of the Adventure Trail.

As we entered the west end of the Ruth Kees Big Tree Trail Joey quickly spotted very dead and dying cedar trees. We took samples in that area on return from the Big Tree. Near the Big Tree there was a really healthy group of mature cedar trees where we took soil samples. I insisted on venturing east of the Big Tree to show the group a nice patch of wild ginger. No showy flowers needed since they are pollinated by ants attracted by whatever smell their flowers give off.

Back to the start of the Ruth Kees Trail we took our samples in the dead and dying area. Crossed power line corridor through a tunnel formed by over-branching vine maples. Had to tell the story about the Adventure Trail. Headed west on the Wetland Trail and came in the blackberry free route to the large cedars we had noted soon after getting up to the Plateau.

We had mixed feelings at the end of our hike. A really nice group of people on a beautiful Friday evening doing something constructive but with a whole new awareness of something not right in the natural world we so appreciate. We were glad we could help out Joey and other scientists trying to figure out what is going on with our cedar trees.

After this hike, I know I will never look at a cedar tree without noting its health.



More Soil Samples are needed to come to a conclusion. You can help by becoming a community scientist!

There have been some pathogens found in the soil samples we have collected in Issaquah as well as other areas. In order to draw a firm conclusion Joey will need many more soil samples from both healthy and unhealthy trees. You and I can help by following these [instructions for collecting soil samples](#). You can also use the iNaturalist mobile app and document on the [Western Red Cedar Dieback project](#).

If you would like to help and have questions, please feel free to send me an email at president@issaquahalps.org



Restoration of High School Trail

Saturday, July 15 from 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Join IATC and Green Issaquah as we continue our restoration of the High School Trail, a well-loved section of Tiger Mountain.



Support Save Coal Creek at the Newcastle Commons Art Fair

Saturday, July 15 from 10:00 AM – 5:00 PM

Save Coal Creek is teaming with the Newcastle Historical Society for a booth at the Newcastle Commons Arts Fair – come visit or email s24lawrence@gmail.com to volunteer!



Partner Event: Forest Steward Volunteer Orientation

Saturday, Aug. 26 – *Save the date!*

Become a volunteer Forest Steward with the City of Issaquah to lead your own Green Issaquah restoration party! More details to come.





Geology of the Alps: Underfoot at Red Town on Cougar Mountain

Saturday, July 8 from 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Dig into the geology near the Red Town Trailhead on Cougar Mountain by joining geologist Tom Doe for this 3-mile exploratory hike.



Forest Carbon Hike: Harvey Manning Park

Wednesday, July 12 from 12:00 PM – 1:30 PM

Join Kathleen Farley-Wolf, King County's Forest Carbon Program Manager, on an interactive hike to learn how KC's forest carbon credits program helps reduce the emissions of greenhouse gasses.



Teddy Bear Hike – Swamp Trail

Thursday, July 13 from 10:30 AM – 12:30 PM

This family-friendly hike along the Swamp Trail is meant for the young at heart. Starting at High Point Trailhead, kids will hear the story of Zoey and the Swamp Monster while exploring the beautiful forest and wetlands of Tiger Mountain.



Challenging Hike – West Tiger Cable Line Trail

Saturday, July 22 from 9:00 AM – 11:00 AM

Join Alex Galeana, IATC's newest Board Member, on a fun, challenging hike to West Tiger 3, via the Cable Line and West Tiger 3 Trails.



Intermediate Hike – Explore Tiger Mountain with IATC's New ED

Monday, July 24 from 5:30 PM – 8:30 PM

Join IATC's new Executive Director, Nicole Assumpcao, for a fun jaunt around the forests of Tiger Mountain while swapping stories about what the Issaquah Alps mean to you.



Critical Habitats for Climate Change

Sunday, July 30 from 10:00 AM – 12:30 PM

Join the IATC and the City of Issaquah on a guided hike along Pickering Reach to explore how riparian areas and wetlands are critical habitats for plant and wildlife diversity in the face of a rapidly changing climate.



Cougar Mountain Geology: Underfoot at Sky Country Trailhead

Saturday, August 5 from 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Dig into the geology near the Sky Country trailhead on Cougar Mountain by joining geologist Tom Doe for this 3-mile exploratory hike.



The Apparatus

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