

The NUDE & NATURAL Newsletter

Go barefoot all over!

NAC at Seattle's Magnuson Park

Mark Storey
NAC board member

Naturist activists must seize an opportunity, even if it's a long shot.

Warren G. Magnuson Park is a 336-acre piece of real estate on some of Seattle's most expensive waterfront. Long occupied by the Navy, this prime piece of open land – stretching for a mile along the beautiful Lake Washington – is now a city park. However, it continues to attract interest from every cash-wielding developer, public user group, soccer player, gardener, off-leash dog fan, artist, boater, and kite flyer. The occasional skinny-dipper has long blended with the crowd.

The park is named after Warren Grant Magnuson, a U.S. Senator for Washington from 1944-1981. In 1976, Seattle began the process of making the old Navy air base on the property its second largest city park. For nearly 40 years, skinny-dippers and nude sunbathers made sporadic use of the quiet and largely secluded north corner of the Lake Washington shoreline. There has never been an organized user group, and once the area most often used by skinny-dippers was turned into an off-leash dog run, the usable stretch of shoreline was reduced to a mere few dozen yards, with dogs and owners throwing soggy tennis balls to the immediate north, and a children's swimming beach approximately 100 yards to the south. Nearby bushes have allowed some privacy for sunbathing, and for the most part, nudity has not been much of an issue.

Body Freedom Collaborative co-founder Daniel Johnson has tried to stay attuned to what nude use Magnuson Park continues to receive, and he monitors Seattle Parks and Recreation's response to it. He informed the Naturist Action Committee and other nudity-friendly groups of an opportunity for the public to provide limited input in a fast-approaching meeting on the City's future plans for the park, and the Naturist Action Committee acknowledged the value of the opportunity.



Body Freedom Collaborative co-founder Daniel Johnson gestures toward the "Clothing-Optional Opportunities" item from the April 25 meeting addressing the uses of Magnuson Park.

On April 23, 2012, NAC issued a NAC Action Alert urging Seattle-area naturists and their friends to attend the April 25 public meeting co-hosted by the Magnuson Park Advisory Committee (aka "Council") and Seattle Parks and Recreation. The Wednesday evening meeting was ostensibly to allow the public to comment on the goals MPAC had agreed upon after earlier public input. The MPAC has as its mission to advise "Seattle Department of Parks and Recreation on the stewardship of Warren G. Magnuson Park for the benefit of current and future generations."

The official intent of the April 25 meeting was not to compile a wish list of uses for the park. Instead, it was to see if the public understood the general goals (as contrasted with specific uses) of the current draft of the "Magnuson Park Strategic Action Plan." Even so, nearly 20 attendees from NAC, The Naturist Society, the SLUGS naturist club, the American Association for Nude Recreation, Fraternity Snoqualmie nudist club, and local unaffiliated skinny-dippers made up approximately one third of the public turnout, and they successfully made the point over and over again that a clothing-optional beach should be considered in planning for recreational use of Magnuson Park.

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The Naturist Society LLC / Naturist Action Committee / Naturist Education Foundation

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The Naturist Society, LLC / Naturist Action Committee / Naturist Education Foundation

Meeting organizers opted for what they called a "European" style of discussions, with four tables set apart for four different issues (e.g., pertaining to land use, building maintenance, concessioners), and with attendees split randomly into four groups to rotate among the tables. Facilitators placed butcher paper on the walls to record comments, and by the end of the evening reference to clothing-optional beach use was found just about everywhere. Of the free beach enthusiasts who showed up, it was clear that most were ready to politely but firmly make it known that skinny-dippers are part of this city's community.

Is a clothing-optional beach now on the list of likely uses for Magnuson Park? Probably not. It will take far more than attending one meeting to drive that demand home. Still, Seattle knows about skinny-dippers, and its Parks system has what naturists would say a decent working relationship with them. NAC has organized clothed beach clean-ups and other volunteer projects for Seattle Parks & Rec, so they know who we are and that we're decent people to work with. NAC also teamed up with the Body Freedom Collaborative on September 2, 2006 to host a clothing-optional afternoon at a Magnuson Park beach. NAC even supplied hamburgers for those who showed up.

As I was sitting at one of the tables in the April 25 meeting waiting for an opportunity to inject yet another call

for a nude beach, the facilitator brought the subject up as she was telling our group what the previous group had commented on minutes before. She said that some in the group had wanted to see a clothing-optional beach at Magnuson. She chuckled good naturedly and told us that there had been nude use at Magnuson before, and that there was even a full nude picnic just a few yards away from a clothed wedding party. The wedding party, she said, had no problem with the nearby skinny-dippers. "Why, the nudists were even BBQing hamburgers." I smiled, thinking, "Yah, and I was flipping those burgers that day, naked as the sun."

What her comment told me was that small things like an organized nude day at the park, or even semi-organized input at a clothed public meeting can have lasting effects. Obviously the BFC/NAC picnic story had made the rounds among all those involved in managing the park's future, and skinny-dippers came out looking pretty good. Gaining a new clothing-optional site on public lands is a long, arduous, task, requiring commitment of inordinate amounts of time by a large group of articulate and informed people. Such a community is hard to come by for any interest group. Still, Magnuson Park's advisory committee and Seattle Parks & Rec are likely even now talking about all the naturists who showed up at the meeting.

Step, by step, by step...even little ones can have a lasting impact.



NAC board member Mark Storey is pictured in the rightmost quarter of this scene from the April 25 Magnuson Park meeting.

More Information

MAGNUSON
PICNIC 2006



BFC/NAC picnic in 2006
www.naturistaction.org/picnic2006

NAC Action Alert April 23, 2012
www.naturistaction.org/magnuson2012

MAGNUSON
ALERT 2012





One of the new DNR closure signs near Mazo Beach.

Mazo Beach

Adjacent areas off-limits. Clothing-optional beach impact is minimized.

MAZOMANIE, Wisconsin – In an effort to deter illicit behavior, the state Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has installed signage reflecting the closure of areas near the traditional clothing-optional beach on the Wisconsin River in Dane County. DNR has made it clear that the Department is not targeting mere nudity.

For decades, a succession of Dane County prosecutors has refused to act on arrests or citations for simple nudity at Mazo Beach. However, adjacent wooded areas have become sites for illicit public sexual activity and drug-related crimes, which are prosecuted. By declaring up to 70 acres of nearby state property to be closed seasonally to public use, DNR officials are hoping to add charges of *trespass* and *failure to obey a closure order* to their law enforcement arsenal.

The Department of Natural Resources has closed nearby areas and posted signs in past years, too, with varying degrees of success. The effect of the current closure and the latest installation of signs near Mazo Beach is slightly different. The traditional bathing and sunning areas are unaffected, but

visitors to the river will notice that the sandbar (which is connected to the shore this year) has closure signs on it, as does the island with the trees on it. Those areas have officially been off-limits for years, but the appearance of signs there may be jarring for some. DNR has declined to provide maps that delineate the closed areas. DNR spokesman Brian Hefty says the Department prefers that beachgoers on public land “walk until they run into a sign.”

As it has also done sporadically in some past years, DNR has cut down the willows that thrive downstream from the entrance to Mazo Beach. The willows are not trees, but densely growing spindly weeds that provide visual screening. DNR is removing the natural barrier, it says, as part of its effort to reduce conflict between groups of users.

Ultimately, it seems DNR doesn't *really* believe the signs will keep folks out of the woods. The Department is working on plans to station a ranger within the mosquito-and-tick-infested woods this summer to pounce on scofflaws. DNR has not made public the names of rangers who are on the list of eager applicants who are clamoring for the assignment.

“We’re not going to change anything in how we’ve dealt with simple nudity ... just being nude on the beach in the past. We’re going to continue to enforce the law as it would pertain to sexual activity.”

– Wisconsin DNR ranger Jeremy Plautz



Upcoming naturist festivals, gatherings and events

www.naturistsociety.com Click on EVENTS

Gatherings and Festivals are opportunities to spend time and exchange ideas with your naturist friends. Attend workshops and special events - or just relax. Be there!

EASTERN GATHERING

Camp Westmont - Poyntelle, PA
June 11 - 17, 2012

Reservations: [Call TNS \(800\) 886-7230](tel:8008867230)
www.campwestmont.com

NUDE RECREATION WEEK™

July 9 - 15, 2012

NATURIST YOUTH CAMP

Sunsport - Loxahatchee Groves, FL
July 7 - 15, 2012

Phone: (800) 551-7217
www.sunsportgardens.com

NORTHEAST FESTIVAL

Empire Haven - Moravia, New York
July 31 - August 5, 2012

Phone: (315) 497-0135
<http://empirehaven.homestead.com/>

CANADIAN NATURIST FESTIVAL

La Pommerie, St-Antoine-Abbé QC
August 1 - 5, 2012

Phone: (888) 926-4723
www.pommerie.com

WESTERN GATHERING

Sun Meadow Resort - Worley, Idaho
August 2 - 5, 2012

Phone (208) 686-8686
<http://sunmeadow.org>

NAC Board will miss two seasoned activists

OSHKOSH, Wisconsin – At separate times and for different reasons, two members of the board of the Naturist Action Committee have resigned recently. Rich Pasco and Morley Schloss each stepped off the board in the month of May. NAC board members also serve as board members of the Naturist Education Foundation. Board members are volunteers.

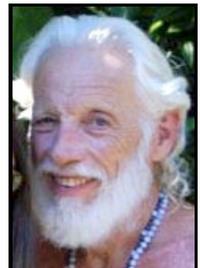
Pasco, who had previously served on the board for a number of years in the early 1990s, found himself overloaded recently and reluctantly had to shed some of his volunteer responsibilities. Pasco remains the head of Bay Area Naturists in California.

Schloss is owner of Sunsport Gardens Family Naturist Resort in Loxahatchee, Florida. At the time of his departure, he was the longest serving NAC board member, having participated in the very beginnings of the organization. Schloss left the board in the wake of a scheduling overlap that placed the Western Naturist Gathering on the calendar opposite the Northeast Festival.

NAC Chairman Bob Morton said, "We will obviously miss both Rich and Morley, especially for the experience and sense of history they've contributed." Pasco and Schloss have both expressed interests in remaining affiliated with NAC by becoming Area Representatives.



PASCO.



SCHLOSS.

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