

Press Release

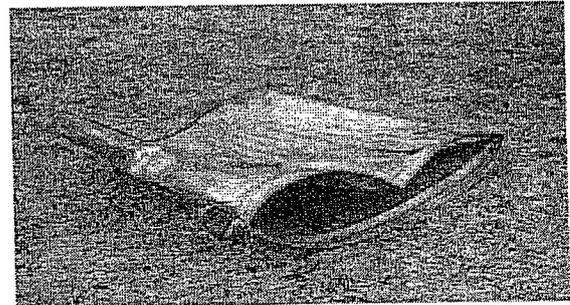
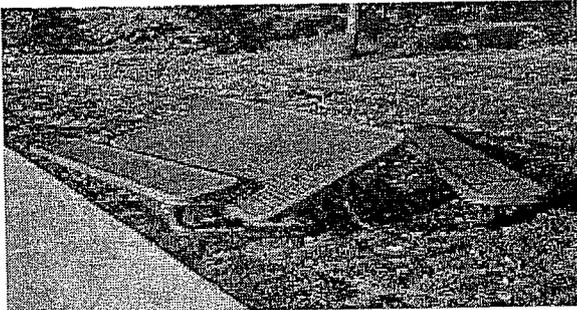
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 9, 2009

CONTACT: Tom Hellen
Public Works Director
788-9830 X 14

City of Hailey Issues Warning to Skate Park Abusers

Since 2002 the development and use of our world renowned Hailey Skate Park has been a pride and joy to many Hailey citizens. Volunteer fund raising and labor efforts created this top-of-the-line skate park which provides the City's youth a recreational place to enjoy at no cost to them. With its inclusion of a full radius concrete pipe 16 feet in diameter and a 16 foot roll-in with handrails, this park stands as a satisfying return for our community's dedicated hard work. The park has generated international attention in the form of multiple skateboarding videos, top class athletes including Tony Hawk, Danny Way, Mark Gonzales, and Julian Stranger.

Recent vandalism and misuses within the park have led city leaders to discuss whether closing the park should be considered. Since the fall of 2007 there has been regular abuse of park rules. The trash cans have been used as jumps, damaging the cans in the process and leaving garbage strewn on the grounds. A picnic bench valued at \$700 was crushed. The Skate Park Rules sign was first painted over, then stolen. Most recently in the early morning hours of April 2, 2009 the port-a-potty was pushed and spilled onto the parking area.



Hailey Police responded to a disturbance call at the skate park on April 6, during which they confiscated a B.B. gun. Police surveillance of the park has been increased due to reports of illegal tobacco use and bullying behavior by older youth toward young park users. Hailey Police officers will identify park abusers, remove them from the park, and issue them a warning to discontinue use of the park. Violation of that no-trespass order may result in the arrest of the trespasser.

Mayor Davis, at the request of the Hailey Parks and Lands Board, has scheduled a city council discussion of Hailey Skate Park issues on April 27, 2009 at 5:30 p.m. The public is invited to participate in this discussion with the Hailey City Council; public comment will be invited during the meeting or in writing prior to the meeting.

Heather Dawson

From: carol.brown@haileycityhall.org
Sent: Friday, April 24, 2009 11:00 AM
To: Elizabeth Zellers
Cc: Heather Dawson
Subject: Re: Hailey Skate Park

Hi Elizabeth, thanks for your thoughtful note. I agree with you that there are plenty of solutions that could be tried, before closing the skate park. I suspect at the public meeting, many ideas will get aired on how to keep the park friendly for the little guys, and so that that the little guys aren't afraid to go there. Andy Gilbert had a great point about the Ketchum skate park that would transfer well to this one. He said that older skaters were a presence at the Ketchum park -- that they helped police the park and explain to the younger riders what was acceptable and what was not. We need to tap into our older skaters to 'set the culture' about skating (and stopping bullying behaviors, etc. when they see it.) Someday Wiley (isn't that your little boy's name?) will be skating there!! Or is he already and I've just lost track of time? Carol

Quoting Elizabeth Zellers <eezsvid@gmail.com>:

> Dear Councilwoman Brown,
>
> I am writing this e mail to ask that the City Council NOT close the
> skate park. That park is a valuable asset to this city and our youth (and some of
> us not that young). I would rather have children "in town" where there is
> at least some minimum supervision as opposed to them heading elsewhere
> out of sight.
>
> I also believe that if someone is found vandalizing the premises that
> that individual (or their parents if a minor) should be made
> responsible for any and all repairs and expenses.
>
> Thank you for your attention to this matter.
>
> Kind Regards,
>
> Elizabeth Zellers
> 1030 Red Elephant
> Hailey, Idaho 83333
>

Mary Cone

From: Heather Dawson [heather.dawson@haileycityhall.org]
Sent: Friday, April 17, 2009 3:11 PM
To: 'Mary Cone'
Subject: FW: hailey skatepark.

Hi Mary – for council packet. HD

From: Andy Gilbert [mailto:andy@svsef.org]
Sent: Friday, April 17, 2009 3:04 PM
To: heather.dawson@haileycityhall.org; robin.crotty@haileycityhall.org; carol.brown@haileycityhall.org
Cc: tom.hellen@haileycityhall.org; bkeefe@cox.net; burkefamily203@cox.net; don.keirn@haileycityhall.org; fritz.haemmerle@haileycityhall.org
Subject: hailey skatepark.

Dear Mayor Davis and members of the City Council;

I was very unhappy to hear of the recent troubles at the Hailey Skatepark. I was involved in the planning for the skatepark in Ketchum and to a much smaller extent the Hailey project as well. As a skater for over twenty years I would like to offer some input and ideas as to what might be done short of closing this amazing park.

First off I don't think that the troubles the park is experiencing are anything new to skateparks or to any public facility for that matter. Skateparks tend to go through phases; there is the planning stage where anything is possible and everyone is full of good ideas and energy to get the thing built. I would remind everyone that Andy Andrews and all the volunteers truly created a grass root, community effort that involved everyone, city, skater and parent alike. Once the park is there often the same people who were involved in the project take ownership of the park and are the real stewards of the park taking care of the day to day policing needed to truly enjoy the park. Once the honey moon is over and the park has been around awhile the knowledge of how the park got there, and the hard work that went into it can be lost on the next generation of skaters and I think this is where we are now.

When the Hailey Park was completed the Ketchum Park was being re-built and the older skaters were a presence at the park that helped police the park and explain to the younger riders what was acceptable and what was not. Once the Ketchum Park was done these skaters many of whom live in Ketchum began spending more time there and this same policing continues there where there have been very few problems to date. In addition many of the kids involved in the Hailey project are college age and not currently living in the area and the older skaters have families now and time at the park can come at a premium.

In my experience most of the troubles at skateparks are not caused by kids (or adults) who are active skateboarders, but by hanger-on's who like the image and idea of skateboarding. If a kid is truly trying to improve as a skater they don't have time to get into trouble. What I am getting at is that it requires all of us to educate the new users of the park what is okay and what is going to have an adverse effect on the park. This can be done a few different ways but mutual respect is the key to this working. Police should stop by the park from time to time but do it in away that fosters a relationship with the users. Get out of the car and see how everyone is "hey did you learn a new trick today"? Get to know who the kids are. This goes along way and has worked well in Ketchum. The older skaters need to feel they can tell the younger skaters to pitch in and use the park the right way. This can be done without talking down to them and can actually empower some of the younger kids that are there for the right reasons anyway to become the new leaders in the future. Parents also need to understand that the park is not a babysitter, if parents get to know how the park works and who is there not only will they feel better about their kids using it, but the occasional adult presence at the park is a good thing.

I guess what I am getting at is that all the players, city, skater, parent and police need to work together to create a dialogue of mutual respect and education to get back to the business of skateboarding. I for one am will to pitch in and try to help. We have an amazing community of skaters in this valley as evident by the two world class parks we enjoy. Just because the parks are there doesn't mean the work is done, time to get back at it.

Andy Gilbert
Program director
Sun Valley Snowboard Team
Skateboarder

Heather Dawson

From: dave hanning [dave.hanning@gmail.com]
Sent: Thursday, April 16, 2009 9:24 AM
To: heather.dawson@haileycityhall.org
Subject: [Spam?] skate park closure is a big mistake

To the City of Hailey,

You have expressed a typical uptight adult and governmental behavior by stating you will be closing the Hailey skate because of a lack of respect shown at the park by a very small number of the parks users. What of the others who live to skate in Hailey? What of the kids who have done no wrong? Your statement of closure is the exact wrong response to the situation. The decision to close the park is one that has already occurred around the country and has been met with strong resistance and increased destructive behavior. You are not taking a toy away from a bad child, you are acting and reacting as a dictator would. This situation exemplifies why Hailey's government is full of the wrong kinds of minds. But if you feel eliminating recreation opportunities for our youths will improve their behavior, then you can count on me voting you out of office next election.

You are making a very big mistake if you close the park. And I will never support any of you responsible for its closure in any way. I know kids and this is the fastest way to increased problems within our community.

Good luck with your kid hating agenda.

Dave Hanning
dave.hanning@gmail.com
po box 10153
224 pinewood lane unit 231c
Ketchum, ID 83340
801-641-7103

Heather Dawson

From: Gretchen Halle [gretchenhalle@u.boisestate.edu]
Sent: Sunday, April 19, 2009 11:10 PM
To: heather.dawson@haileycityhall.org
Subject: [Spam?] KEEP THE HAILEY SKATEPARK OPEN!!!

Dear Hailey City Hall-

I have lived in the Wood River Valley since 1992 when i was only 2 years old . I was about 13 when the Hailey skatepark opened I remember how excited all the skaters were and I spent many many days there watching the cute boys skate. It is an important part of my teenage years. It might sound stupid but the best times my friends and I had in middle school and high school were sitting at that park flirting. Even though i don't skate myself i know about half the town does and i know how much they love that park. Businesses complain about skaters on their stairs and in front of their doors but if the skate park is closed then they will have no choice but to skate there. Skateboarding keeps those boys out of trouble for the most part, and it gives them something to do. If that skatepark closes I guarantee more complaints from businesses about them in front of their stores and more kids getting in trouble because they have nothing to do and no where to skate. If it is a problem with them keeping it clean just imagine the whole town looking that way instead of one little piece. LONG LIVE HAILEY SKATEPARK!!

-Gretchen Halle

Heather Dawson

From: Spencer Cord [penceboarder@yahoo.com]

Sent: Thursday, April 16, 2009 3:45 PM

To: heather.dawson@haileycityhall.org

Subject: Do not close skatepark

To whom it may concern:

The hailey skatepark can not be closed. My name is Spencer Corovano, i grew up in the valley, and learning to skateboard there altered my life. Many people worked very hard to fund this skate park. The youth of the valley can and will benefit from having these facilities, i beleive the hailey skatepark will produced a professional athlete within the next ten years, due to its world class facility.

Trends in thrasing have been present in the past. educating the users of the skatepark must be done to teach children respect for the park, and has been done easily in the past.

thanks,

Spencer

Heather Dawson

From: Heather Dawson [heather.dawson@haileycityhall.org]
Sent: Thursday, April 16, 2009 8:59 AM
To: 'Nathan Fierman'
Subject: RE: Hailey Skate Park

Thanks Nathan –

I will make sure the Mayor, Council and staff have this correspondence prior to the public hearing on April 27th.
Heather Dawson

From: Nathan Fierman [mailto:nathan@mdfrealtors.com]
Sent: Wednesday, April 15, 2009 11:48 PM
To: heather.dawson@haileycityhall.org
Cc: 'A&K'
Subject: Hailey Skate Park

Dear Heather,

I understand from my good friend Andy Andrews (I am out of town) that there has been quite a bit of damage done at the skate park recently and that this is going to be discussed at Monday's City Council meeting. Since I won't be there I wanted to send this email in support of doing what we need to do to preserve that park and prosecute those responsible for damaging it and would like you to give this to Rick Davis. As you might know I am co-owner of the Hitchrack, Motel Gas and Grocery and my wife and I own the building at 100 Main Street where Windermere, The Bead Shop and the Toy Store are located.

I feel that the skate park is an important asset for Hailey to protect and preserve. We shouldn't let people who are ruining it for others get away with this. Perhaps the use of a plain clothes police officer or informant would be good and more patrols. Maybe it is possible to install a video security system as well. I would think that people might want to donate some money to purchase that if required or possible. I think it is important to let people who do these kinds of things see that it won't be tolerated. Incidentally, I thought Tom Hellen did a nice job with the press release on this. Please let me know if there is anything I can do to help.

Sincerely,

Nathan M. Fierman

Nathan M. Fierman
Associate Broker, GRI
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208-309-0438 - Mobile
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