

THE COUNCIL REPORT



Vol.1, No.1

Fall 1991

The Council Report is a digest of the October 27, 1991 board of directors meeting. In order to inform you of the work being done by your officers and board of directors, the secretary has condensed the minutes of that meeting. We encourage your response to The Report. This publication will not replace The Wild Cascades which deals with issues in far more depth and is our publication of record.

Mean, Lean Battle Book

In 1990 President Dave Fluharty expressed the need for a history of the North Cascades National Park describing the events leading to its creation in 1968 and its subsequent management. After lengthy consideration, Harvey Manning, a member of our board of directors and a noted northwest author, volunteered to serve as lead writer of a group effort. He defined the goal as not the "definitive, scholarly, last word," but a "mean, lean battle book."

The challenges facing the North Cascades Conservation Council in the 1990s is as significant as that of the 1960s. The objective then was to obtain a

North Cascades National Park; it is now to see that the North Cascades Complex, and most crucially the Lake Chelan National Recreation Area, is managed in accordance with the National Park Act. To prepare for the future we must look to the past. So much information has been broadcast by self-serving interests that the public, the press, and government officials must be educated as to "what really happened" - and is happening, and should be happening.

The first draft of the manuscript has been completed and reviewed by the board of directors. The second draft is nearly complete, and will also be reviewed. No attempt has been made at this point to find a publisher for the narrative in book form, but a "desk top publishing" edition will be widely distributed in 1992.

Writing for E.I.S. Contracted

The Denver Service Center of the National Park Service contracted with Jones and Jones, a Seattle firm of consulting landscape architects, to re-write the "compatibility standards" of the Environmental Impact Statement for

the Stehekin Valley within the Lake Chelan National Recreation Area.

This E.I.S. revision is among the requirements of the consent decree settlement of a law suit brought by the North Cascades Conservation Council - a suit that challenged the adequacy of the Park Service planning effort. (In the consent decree, the National Park Service agreed to pay the North Cascades Conservation Council's legal expenses, an admission that Park Service failures directly caused the suit.)

Under the contract Jones and Jones must work with all parties. We believe the process should give the North Cascades Complex control over appropriate private property activities in the valley. These activities must be compatible with the national significance of the area.

We are deeply concerned by the involvement of Denver Service Center and by its use of a private contractor.

Jones and Jones has made its reputation in urban parks and roadside campgrounds. At this time we do not know if the firm understands national park principle and standards. Consultants of this sort operate through a voting process. It very well may be necessary for the North Cascades Conservation Council to take responsibility for giving introduction on principles and defending the national interest.

The Council asserts the right of the National Park Service to establish zoning regulations in the Lake Chelan National Recreation Area, including some control of private property activi-

ties in the Stehekin Valley. To implement such controls without resorting to condemnation proceedings would be desirable, but such proceedings may be necessary if property owners insist on developments that threaten the qualities that led to recognition of the Valley as a national treasure.

The Council hopes the work of Jones and Jones will be compatible with the regulations of Chelan County while protecting the broader national interest.

Stehekin Road

Tension continues between the residents of the Stehekin Valley and the National Park Service over the Stehekin Road. The road had been deeded to the National Park Service in 1970.

On July 9, 1991, the Chelan County Commissioners passed a resolution requesting that the Stehekin Road be returned to the jurisdiction of Chelan County. The effect on park values were this to happen can only be the subject of nightmares. Thus far the Park Service has held firm. The legal dispute looks headed for a "quiet title action" to uncloud the title.

The Chelan County action is among the strategies of the handful of Valley residents seeking to commercialize the National Recreation Area to an extent the Park Service will not permit. Among other strategies is resisting efforts of the Park Service to acquire "national interest" lands, even when offered by willing sellers. The claim is made that the Park Service is denying them an opportunity for "subsistence

living." The term originally referred to "living off the land" in the style of frontier America, but in the Valley the definition has been expanded to subdividing land, selling lots, and operating whatever business an entrepreneur wishes wherever and however.

Pressure is being applied on the Congressional delegation; one meeting in Chelan included a staff member of Congressman Sid Morrison's. Letters are needed from those of us who wish to see park values retained.

Having earlier been informed the Stehekin Road had been virtually destroyed by last winter's storms, the Council supposed the Park Service would be forced by poverty to abandon the upper reaches. The damage was less than originally expected and the road has been opened once again to Cottonwood Camp. The future of the road is thus left to further debate.

Land and Water Conservation Funding

From the amount of money appropriated from the Land and Water Conservation Fund and then delegated to the North Cascades Complex by the last Congress for the purchase of inholdings, about \$600,000 remains. From all indications, the National Park Service will attempt to reach agreement on sales with two owners in the Stehekin Valley which should then deplete the sum.

Firewood Plan

The Firewood Management Plan adopted by the National Park Service was

among the bad plans that led to our filing suit, and the issue will be addressed again in the revised E.I.S. The North Cascades Conservation Council has long insisted that supplying firewood on demand to the local residents is not among the proper activities of the National Park Complex.

The National Park Service has informed us that it will no longer be burning wood in park facilities in the Stehekin Valley. Propane stoves are expected to be in place by the fall of 1992 and the propane is to be shipped up the lake. The estimate is that this will decrease the amount of wood used from the valley by 25-35 percent. The private stoves and fireplaces in the Valley will also be subject to meeting air quality standards of the Environmental Protection agency shortly.

Current logging of the Valley for firewood is just as objectionable as was the logging for lumber proposed by the U.S.F.S. in the 1960s.

Sewage in Lake Chelan

The North Cascades Conservation Council received a letter from a Stehekin resident indicating that a neighbor had dumped raw sewage into Lake Chelan. Chelan County Health Department will be contacted for possible action, for we are concerned about water quality in Lake Chelan. When the septic tanks need pumping, the waste must be taken down lake and properly treated.

The Council Report is published by The North Cascades Conservation Council. The North Cascades Conservation Council may be reached by writing to the North Cascades Conservation Council, P.O. Box 95980, University Station, Seattle, WA 98145-1980

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