
The Wild Cascades

THE JOURNAL OF THE NORTH CASCADES CONSERVATION COUNCIL

SPRING 1995



LCNRA EIS DECISION EXPECTED IN JUNE

The Wild Cascades - Spring 1995

In This Issue

- 3** The President's Report
- 4** News Update
- 11** International Park: A Plot?
- Kevin Herrick
- 13** Mountain Loop Highway
- Rick McGuire
- 14** Land Trusts
- Phil Zalesky and Carolyn McConnell
- 17** North Cascades Glaciers Retreat
- Mauri S. Peltó
- 23** Letters
- Letters to NCCC and Response

Cover: Luna Cirque and the Pickets
- Walt Sellers Photo

The Wild Cascades

Journal of the North Cascades Conservation Council

Editor: Betty Manning

Editorial Committee:

Dave Brower

David Fluharty

Kevin Herrick

Carolyn McConnell

Jim McConnell

Phil and Laura Zalesky

Printing by EcoGraphics

The Wild Cascades is published three times a year (Spring, Summer and Fall). NCCC members receive this journal. Address letters, comments, send articles to *The Wild Cascades* Editor, North Cascades Conservation Council, 1516 Melrose, Seattle, WA 98122



The Wild Cascades is printed on recycled paper with soy-based ink.

The North Cascades Conservation Council was formed in 1957 "To protect and preserve the North Cascades' scenic, scientific, recreational, educational, and wilderness values." Continuing this mission, NCCC keeps government officials, environmental organizations, and the general public informed about issues affecting the Greater North Cascades Ecosystem. Action is pursued through legislative, legal, and public participation channels to protect the lands, waters, plants and wildlife.

Over the past third of a century the NCCC has led or participated in campaigns to create the North Cascades National Park Complex, Glacier Peak Wilderness, and other units of the National Wilderness System from the W.O. Douglas Wilderness north to the Alpine Lakes Wilderness, the Henry M. Jackson Wilderness, the Chelan-Sawtooth Wilderness and others. Among its most dramatic victories has been working with British Columbia allies to block the raising of Ross Dam, which would have drowned Big Beaver Valley.

• Membership •

The NCCC is supported by member dues and private donations. These support publication of *The Wild Cascades* and lobbying activities. (NCCC is a non-tax-deductible 501(c)4 organization.) Membership dues for one year are: \$10 - low income/student; \$20 - regular; \$25 - family; \$50.00 - Contributing; \$100 - patron; \$1000 - sustaining. A one-time life membership dues payment is \$500.

The North Cascades Foundation supports the NCCC's non-political efforts. Donations are tax-deductible as a 501(c)3 organization.

Please make your check(s) out to the organization of your choice. The Foundation can be reached through the NCCC mailing address:

**North Cascades
Conservation Council**
P.O. Box 95980
University Station
Seattle, Washington 98145-1980

The North Cascades Conservation Council Office is located at
1516 Melrose, Seattle, WA 98122
1-206-343-2312
Kevin Herrick,
Special Projects Coordinator



Founded in 1957
SEATTLE, WASHINGTON

NCCC Board

President - Marc Bardsley
Board Chairman - Pat Goldsworthy
Vice President - Charles Ehlert
Treasurer - Tom Brucker
Secretary - Phil Zalesky

Bruce Barnbaum
Dick Brooks
Dave Brower
Polly Dyer
Dave Fluharty
Mitch Friedman
Peter Hurley
Conrad Leovy
Harvey Manning
Betty Manning
Carolyn McConnell
Jim McConnell
Rick McGuire
Steve Ralph,
Ken Wilcox
Laura Zalesky

The President's Report

Spring 1995

We have all probably heard and read enough about the November election to last a lifetime. Mercifully, I have a different topic to run past you: the touchy subject of closing existing roads. Are we handling this correctly? I can't think of a more divisive topic. Everyone seems to have a slightly different opinion. NCCC in the past has generally favored pulling back roads when the occasion arises. Two major instances come to mind: the Suiattle River Road washed out a few years ago, leaving about 10 miles of the old road for foot, horse and bicycle traffic only. The controversy over reopening this road was very acrimonious, with the recreational and environmental community noticeably split. The road has since been opened by the U. S. Forest Service.

The Stehekin Road is a subject dear to us all. The decision on closing the upper part of this road has not been finalized by the National Park Service. Anything can happen, but our position has been for closure. The Mountaineers Board of Trustees voted to leave the Stehekin Road open despite their Conservation Committee recommendation for closure. After testifying at the hearing, a person I have climbed with and known for years, actually cursed at me in public because of our position on the road. I can handle it, but it does make you wonder. It seems like the subject of limiting existing access brings out emotions in people unlike other subjects — except maybe their taxes.

More road-closing scenarios are coming up in the near future. Is NCCC ready to deal with this? Some say that keeping access easier for recreationists creates more advocates for preservation of natural values. Many NCCC members want to begin the process of establishing "deeper" wilderness by closing off existing roads and allowing the roads to revert to trails. Others think that we should limit usage of key areas to protect the resources. Is our effort on other problems being degraded by these situations? NCCC membership needs to continue speaking up on this issue, as well as many others.

My point is this — How can we be more aggressive in advocating wilderness protection? Since we can't use "talk radio" to easily air our opinions, please write to the editor of *The Wild Cascades* with your ideas.

Marc Bardsley

NEWS UPDATE

EIS Public Hearing for LCNRA Plan Noisy

In scenes some NCCC veteran campaigners found familiar, the NPS heard from a strident public concerned about the future of the Lake Chelan National Recreation Area. NCCC, the local Sierra Club, The Wilderness Society, Friends of the Earth, the Greater Ecosystem Alliance, National Parks and Conservation Association and many other organizations and individuals came to the Seattle hearing to ask the NPS to do all it can to protect and restore the Stehekin Valley.

In response, a number of property owners, airplane pilots and interested folks spoke in favor of more development and freedom from regulation. Senator Gorton was represented at the hearing by an aide with a letter from the Senator in which the common theme was "the Senator believes local interests should carry much greater weight than long-term national interests supporting protection of the valley."

New ALPS Trails to be Open to Mountain Bikes

The Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest has released a set of alternatives under consideration for the new Beckler Peak-Alpine Baldy trail system. This project is intended to provide new hiking opportunities and alternatives to heavily used trails in the ALPS. Unfortunately, some of the alternatives under study would allow mountain bike use on part or all of the new trails to be constructed. Mountain bikes damage trails and present great hazard to hikers. The Skykomish district needs to hear from the public that we need hiker trails, not biker trails. Write. Address: U.S. Forest Service, Skykomish Ranger District, Skykomish, WA., 98288.

Skagit Hydro Development Threat

Nine small hydroelectric projects have been proposed for construction on tributaries of the Skagit River. Three of the projects, on Rocky, Diobsud, and Irene creeks, would intrude into roadless areas on the Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest. All nine projects would divert free-flowing creeks into pipes to generate just a few megawatts of power, which could be obtained through conservation measures causing far less damage to the landscape of the North Cascades.

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) held a hearing in Mt. Vernon on January 13, 1995 to receive public input on the

projects. A draft EIS has been issued covering the nine projects. A large number of people turned up at the hearing, and except for one hydro developer, testimony was strong and unanimous in opposition to all nine dams.

FERC staff have recommended against licensing four of the nine dams, a remarkable change for an agency which only a few years ago had never met a dam it didn't like. However, construction of any of these small hydro projects will open the door to more and more dams as years go by. If this process isn't stopped, we could wake up one day and find the North Cascades looking like the European Alps, where virtually every stream goes into a pipe. NCCC believes water should flow over rocks, not through pipes. Efforts must be made to stop these projects and keep our streams wild. A final EIS should be out later this year. NCCC will need to be closely involved.

Support Grizzly Bear Recovery in the Cascades— Oppose SB5106

—The choosing of appropriate wildlife management technique is a biological decision. SB5106 would circumvent technical experts. This is bad legislative practice and decision by amateurs.

—There is no reasonable expectation of increased migration of grizzly bears from Canada into Washington's Cascade Mountains.

—As written SB 5106 is an oxymoron. This bill would direct the WDF&W "...develop management programs that will encourage the natural regeneration of grizzly bears in areas of suitable habitat. Grizzly bears shall not be transplanted or introduced into the state...(emphasis added). There is a very small resident population of grizzly bear in this area—estimated at only 10-20 animals. These same studies have shown this is NOT a viable population and is at serious risk of extinction. The population is so small its natural reproductive rate cannot keep up with natural mortality rate. Natural regeneration is not possible!

The only technique currently feasible for preventing extinction of this population is augmentation....This would mean a maximum of 10 bears in a ten-year period...and is likely more than could be done.

— We are all dependent on our natural resources for both economic and biologic survival. The presence of threatened or endangered wildlife species is clear indication of non-sustainable land use practices. Protecting threatened and endangered species is a act of self-preservation. Actively oppose SB5106.

Growth Management Ruling in Chelan County

The long campaign to protect Chelan County's critical habitat and agricultural lands reached a milestone in January when the Hearings Board found the county's agricultural and critical areas plans to be out of compliance with Washington's Growth Management Act.

County attorney Susan Hinkle offered a spirited but meager defense at the compliance hearing in the face of strong testimony from the Icicle Canyon Coalition, the state of Washington, the Yakama Indian Nation, and the Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund's Stephan Volker who represented NCCC and three Chelan County organizations. At one point during the hearing, Hinkle admitted that some of the county's arguments, "may sound pathetic to some people." Apparently the hearings board agreed. They upheld our arguments on critical lands and agricultural areas while allowing some very weak mineral and forest land plans to stand.

The board's ruling will now be passed on to Governor Mike Lowry who holds the power to impose sanctions on the county. Whether he does this is up to high politics. Some Republican politicians have vowed to roll back the Growth Management Act. At least one of the Chelan County Commissioners has clearly decided to hold up work on growth management in the hope that the act might disappear. If it does, we will be seeing more wetland and riparian areas disappearing through uncontrolled development.

Firewood Roads in Stehekin

In the October issue of *The Wild Cascades* we produced a map showing a number of roads leading into the proposed firewood cutting areas. The road locations were based on our past experience with National Park Service woodlots, National Park Service willingness to fund road improvements but not rehabilitation, and because the Draft General Management Plan fails to cover road-building and restoration issues, all of which led to the original NCCC lawsuit.

Since then, we have heard from NPS Chief of Resource Management Bruce Freet that new roads will not be constructed. However, the NPS leaves the door open to using old roads. Old firewood trails still cover the valley.

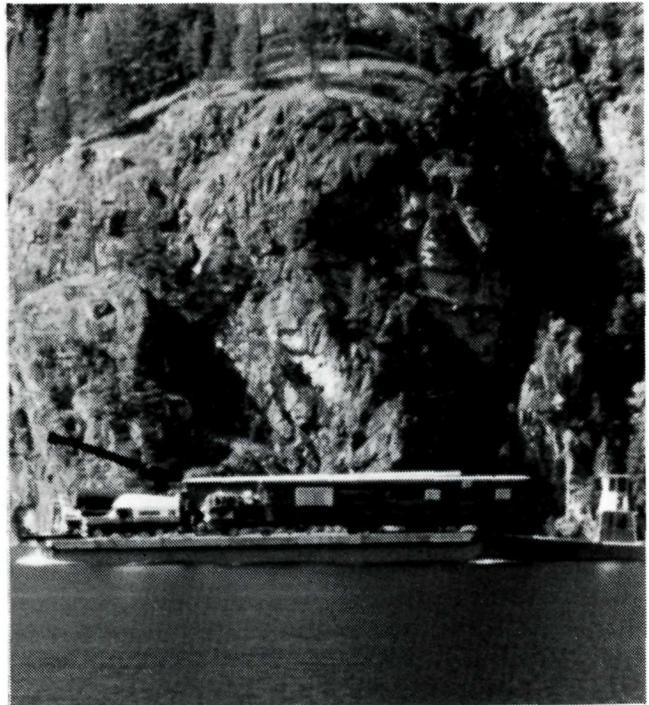
Dog Trekking Update

In the last issue of *The Wild Cascades*, we reported on the illegal but no doubt enjoyable trip a dog and his man took up to Cascade Pass last summer. The NPS has since explained why the dog failed to collect a citation for his journey into no-dog territory. Superintendent Bill Paleck told NCCC that law enforcement rangers

were distracted by the forest fires burning in the region at that time.

Tin Can Trailers Make Exit

At no cost to taxpayers, Superintendent Paleck managed to move the 1960s vintage trailers formerly used to house Park Service personnel out of the Stehekin Valley. A construction company repairing the Stehekin road bought the trailers in 1994 to house their employees. The sale agreement required the contractor to take the trailers when he left.



Barge carrying trailer downlake
—Dave Fluharty Photo

Condominium Cabins Proposed for Head of Lake Chelan

William Stifter of Spokane, owner-developer of the Loggers Point property at the head of Lake Chelan, has submitted designs to Chelan County Planning Department for building 14 condominium cabins on the property. Mr. Stifter's condominium project is a perfect example of why the free market never has and never will take care of our national heritage.

Loggers Point sits in middle of one of the premier views in the North Cascades. High glaciated peaks tower over the forested Stehekin valley. Stehekin is the end of a boat or float plane journey that takes people deep into the wild Cascades, and gateway to the heart of the North Cascades wilderness. At the moment condominiums and tennis courts are a safe 55 miles downlake in Chelan, and that is where they should remain.

The site is exceptionally steep. Preliminary maps show the deeply cut switchback road will have a grade reaching or exceeding 40 per cent. Fourteen condominium units will be sited at the head of the lake and there will be possible additional units and a lodge. The complex will be supported by a marina and a system that will pump sewage uphill to a drainfield.

To the Park Service's credit, Superintendent Paleck sent a letter to the Director of the Chelan County Planning Department outlining a number of concerns. The letter noted that "most of the upland portion of the property has a slope of 70-75 per cent. Only 2 acres appear to be in the 20-45 per cent slope class." Also noted were the lack of soils appropriate to large scale construction. Paleck concluded with, "As presented, we do not see how this proposal can be considered compatible with the purposes for which the Lake Chelan National Recreation Area was established."

—Kevin Herrick



Loggers Point, Stehekin —
Possible condo site?
—Kevin Herrick Photo

Congressional Parks Sellout?

After the November elections, Alaska Congressman Don Young and his Interior Committee, with support from organizations such as the Cato Institute, a free market think tank, have already laid plans to condemn parts of our national parks and wild areas by handing them over to private caretakers and underfunded local government.

His supporting cast includes Congressman Hansen of Utah who recently suggested that Congress create a "Park Closure Commission." Ron Arnold who directs the Bellevue, Washington, Center for Defense of Free Enterprise chimed in with the helpful suggestion that, "Up in Stehekin, for example, you might find a congressional mandate ordering park managers to repatriate land to the original owners." If talk radio politics maintain momentum into the summer, we could be facing a fight that will make the recent Lake Chelan General Management Plan look like a squirt gun fight.

The parks-for-sale plan is not the work of a few wacko politicians who slipped into Congress. Representative Young and Hansen are part of a well organized effort that binds local state and regional groups together under the common banner, Wise Use Movement. The movement has experienced phenomenal success on the county level, and during the November election it made impressive gains on the state and federal levels. Representative Young and Hansen's opening salvo aimed at parks is part of the radical right's attack of the very foundation of our public lands policy.

Two basic premises of the movement are that government should not regulate private lands, and, that public lands should be made private. James Watt, head of the the Department of Interior under the Reagan administration, proposed this move it was rejected. Today, the Watt gospel is being spread again.

—Adapted from Joel Connelly, Seattle Post-Intelligencer, 1/3/95

Seattle Post-Intelligencer, Wednesday, Jan. 11, 1995

National parks aren't for profit

The new chairman of the U.S. House of Representatives subcommittee that oversees national parks is taking a confused approach to his responsibilities.

His task is to preserve the public's patrimony, not sacrifice it to private interests. But that's where he seems headed, and he, unfortunately, seems to be taking some members of this state's delegation with him down that foolish path.

Rep. James Hansen, R-Utah, has told private-property advocates that the nation's park system can be saved only by closing parks that "do not belong in the national park system." He wants to create a "Park Closure Commission."

Hansen didn't name names, but it's clear that little agreement will be found on which park is, as he put it, "the most deserving" of tax dollars. He notes that it costs \$900 million to provide visitors' services at the parks but the service only collects \$100 million in fees.

The idea, it appears on the surface, is to make the park system pay for itself. That will never happen. It was never intended to happen. The United States' national parks are its crown jewels, held in trust by the government. The parks belong to each citizen.

Furthermore, it would be a false economy to shove some parks or historical sites off onto the states, as Hansen suggests; it will not save taxpayers any money and he must well know that few states have resources to take on such an "unfunded federal mandate" — a practice, incidentally, that Hansen's party has vowed to end.

But he ignores all that in a letter he sent to members of the so-called "Wise Use" movement, which aims to end what, in an aberrant twist of logic, it likes to call the "lockup" of lands for public purposes — i.e., not their own private economic purposes.

None of this is to say that the Park Service cannot increase its entrance fees — or write even better contracts with its private concessionaires to bring in more revenue to Uncle Sam. If Hansen and his colleagues truly are determined to make the park service more profitable, ending government giveaways to concessionaires is an excellent place to start.

But it's more likely, as Rep. Peter DeFazio, D-Ore., contends, that quite another agenda is at work here: that of dismantling the public lands in the West to benefit private interests.

History of Holden Mine

Joe D. Dragovich

[Excerpted from *Washington Geology*, March 1994]

"In 1887 a rusty gossan, or area of weathered and oxidized metallic minerals, was observed by Major Rogers while searching the area west of Lake Chelan for a route for the Great Northern Railway. Rogers described the gossan to Mr. Denny of Seattle, who in 1892 outfitted J. H. Holden to evaluate the site. Holden staked claims in July 1892. . . In 1928, Britannia Mining and Smelting Co., a subsidiary of Howe Sound Co., took control of the property, which was explored and developed by another subsidiary, the Chelan Copper Mining Co. The subsidiary relationship was dissolved in 1937 and the Howe Sound Co. began production in 1938.

The Holden mine produced 10 million tons of ore, from which 212 million pounds of copper, 40 million pounds of zinc, 2 million ounces of silver, and 600,000 ounces of gold were extracted. . . The average ton of ore yielded 21.2 pounds of copper (1.06 per cent), 4 pounds of zinc (0.2 per cent), 0.2 ounces of silver, and 0.06 ounces of gold.

The mine was closed in 1957 when costs of operation exceeded the value of minerals recovered. The property was donated to a Lutheran church group in the early 1960s, and the town of Holden is now a church retreat group. . .

The Holden deposit. . . is only one of the known or potential such deposits in Washington. . . However, complex folding and metamorphism of the host rocks has precluded tracing (or even finding) individual deposits for great distances. New mapping by the U.S. Geological Survey and the Division of Geology and Earth Resources is helping identify some of the terranes that have potential. . ."



Holden Mine tailings (early 80s)
—Dave Fluharty Photo