
THE WILD CASCADES

THE JOURNAL OF THE NORTH CASCADES CONSERVATION COUNCIL

SPRING 2009



THE WILD CASCADES ■ Spring 2009

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Cover: *Beaver Pond, Sourdough Ridge reflection of Big Beaver valley.* —BOB GUNNING

The Wild Cascades

Journal of the North Cascades Conservation Council

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Carolyn McConnell and Rick McGuire

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The Wild Cascades Editor

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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 half 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, the Wild Sky 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.

The NCCC is supported by member dues and private donations. These contributions support the full range of the Council's activities, including publication of *The Wild Cascades*. As a 501(c)(3) organization, all contributions are fully tax deductible to the extent allowed by law. Membership dues for one year are: Living Lightly/Student \$10; Individual \$30; Family \$50; Sustaining \$100; Other, \$_____.

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Founded in 1957

SEATTLE, WASHINGTON

The President's Report

Spring 2009

One of the things about the North Cascades Conservation Council that I have always appreciated is that we are a volunteer-based advocacy group that takes on major conservation issues with little or no funding or staff support. Having said that, I now realize that the American Alps Legacy Project is a much more aggressive and proactive campaign that will require funding and staff support if we are to be fully successful.

The American Alps Legacy Project — the effort to complete the conservation vision of the North Cascades National Park area — is a major endeavor (nearly 350,000 acres), comparable to creation of the North Cascades National Park in 1968. It is not only going to take extensive support from concerned citizens like you, but it is also going to require significant financial and staff support to make it happen. Initial funding for the campaign was provided through a few very generous bequests and grants to NCCC. Additional funds will be needed to complete background research, reach out to the public, work with the media, and inform all those who are part of the decision-making process.

The political process of getting a satisfactory bill on the President's desk is likely to take several years. We estimate that as much as \$150,000 will be required to complete this process. Some of this money will be used to compensate NCCC staff, who will spend substantial time setting up and participating in meetings with community and business leaders, working with other conservation groups, communicating with the media, and working with federal government agencies. Volunteer effort has been and will continue to be the cornerstone of NCCC's conservation work. However, staff support is needed for the American Alps campaign.

How can this money be raised? Some funding will be available from foundations. We are aggressively pursuing this. However, the state of the national economy has affected the amount of foundation money available for worthwhile projects such as ours. The most dependable source of funds to carry out the American Alps vision is real people, like the ones reading this article. To get the ball rolling, the NCCC Board of Trustees has pledged to donate more than \$6,000 per year, as long as the campaign continues. Much of the rest will have to come through donations from people like you. Can you help? And if the answer is yes, information on how to give is included in this edition of *The Wild Cascades*. I believe that committed people who know the facts will come through as usual. Please be one of those.

The Holden Mine cleanup problem

Phil Fenner



Remains of Holden Mine's concentrator mill gradually collapse.



Tailing piles in Railroad Creek valley floor smother wetlands, leach into water, and threaten to collapse into the creek.

On the final day of a trans-Cascades backpack trip, Holden Village appeared as an oasis to our group of tired, blistered hikers. Showers, beds and real food! Coming out anywhere else would have meant at least 10 more miles of trail to the first of such creature comforts; for us Holden was a place to rest and recoup. Other backcountry hikers begin their wilderness experience at Holden Village, after disembarking at Lucerne, which is how I first experienced it.

Today Holden Village is a place of religious pilgrimage and retreat. The town was rebuilt and maintained by the Lutheran Church (ELCA) from the original buildings of the former Howe Sound Company mining town. It is a very special place surrounded by wilderness.

But an ever-present monster lurks beneath and on the surface around this village. Just steps away from Holden is an immense pile of mine tailings and other waste rock, smothering the creek valley bottom like a vast, toxic landslide. For 20 years the Howe Sound copper mine operated here with few restrictions on its operation, creating wealth for its owners and stockholders from mineral veins deep beneath the North Cascades. As the pits were dug and the ore brought out, the waste was simply piled up, ignored, left for future generations. And here we are.

In the opening sequence of David Brower's short film, "Wilderness Alps of the Stehekin," a 1957 overflight of the tailings is shown as he comments that the mining town was "recently abandoned. The people moved away in a matter of weeks, their marks will be there for centuries. This has happened here; it could happen in many other parts of the Cascades. Would America have to go without much, to leave its finest wilderness unspoiled?"

The situation at Holden is only slightly improved today compared to that in 1957.

Unlike some other man-made disasters, though, people do not seem threatened by its immediacy. Nor is it widely known, regularly in the news, or seen in person by many. It just happens to be the largest single environmental disaster area in the North Cascades, and one with both the greatest challenges to clean up and the longest history of study by the agencies and corporations that have been charged with creating a plan to mitigate its effects. The very scale of the problem defies the

hiker's imagination, viewed from the friendly, busy village nearby.

A hot shower and a meal and maybe a night on a real bed, and a hiker may just hitch a ride down valley on one of the semi-retired school busses the village operates, taking you to the lake and a boat home. But behind a thin screen of trees, extending up and down the valley for miles, the tailings sit. A few glimpses of the orange plateaus could be seen from the trail coming in, but you have to walk across the footbridge over the creek at the upstream end of the village to see its extent, and it really helps to take the better part of a day to explore all the levels of the lingering mess. A mill was built high on the south side of the valley close to the pit-head, where the ore was ground to a fine powder with the valuable parts separated and shipped to smelters (remember Asarco in Ruston?), while the less valuable rock, ground to dust, was dumped nearby. The piles of ever-increasing tailings gradually pushed the creek against its northern bank, covering prime riparian habitat as they piled up during the 20 years of operation.

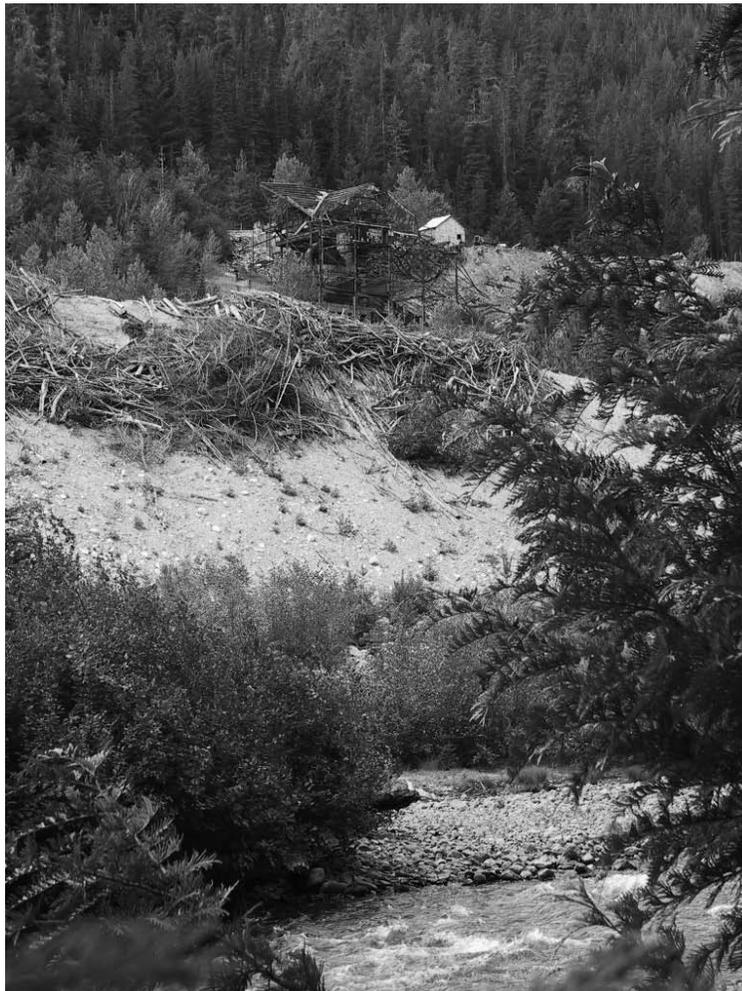
Thanks to the 1872 Mining Act, still essentially in force today, the Holden Mine was the source of great mineral wealth, created with little or no concern for what would remain for future generations to clean up. The issues range from the 90 acres of former wetlands suffocated under 8.5 millions tons of toxic tailings, to the substantial volumes of acidic water pouring from the flooded mineshafts, flowing into otherwise pristine Railroad Creek and ultimately into Lake Chelan, which now acts as the final settling pond to filter the pollutants from the Columbia River.

Disaster scenarios have been put forth. In the perfect storm of a heavy, sustained rainstorm followed by a moderate-to-severe earthquake, perhaps related to the nearby Glacier Peak volcano, the tailings could partially liquefy and begin to flow down valley, gaining speed to form a mudflow, ultimately decimating the Railroad Creek valley and leaving a huge debris fan, obliterating what is now a much smaller natural one known as Lucerne Landing on Lake Chelan, where the boat dock today provides daily moorage to the *Lady of the Lake* and a staging platform for the Holden busses.

Continued on page 6



Smaller tailing piles dot the slopes above Holden mill.



Mill ruins seen over the face of tailing piles next to Railroad Creek.

All photos by PHILIP FENNER

The Holden Mine cleanup problem, *continued from page 5*

But it wouldn't take a perfect storm to cause a lot of additional damage to Railroad Creek near Holden. Only slightly more severe than average storms could trigger slope failures along the margin of the tailings where they are hard up against the creek, burying the creek. Small versions of this have already taken place. The tailings form a flat expanse some 50 feet in height with their edges precisely as the mining company finished with them, as steep as they can be, at the so-called "angle of repose," ready to slide directly into the creek. The cover of the current USFS Feasibility Study is a good photo of exactly this sort of slide.

Incremental, gradual disasters are ongoing, too, and have been for 50 years, in the form of toxic contamination of the surroundings, especially the water. Stabilization efforts have included the more-or-less successful planting of trees and other vegetation directly atop the tailings aimed at preventing what were once orange dust storms that would rise up from the surface of the tailings expanses and coat the lower valley, including the village, in summer.

Meanwhile the cleanup buck has been passed down through multiple corporate mergers and acquisitions during the last 50 years since the mining ended. Thanks

to the federal Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA), in 1993 a company called Alumet was found to be the liability holder. Alumet released a draft feasibility study for the cleanup but it was judged deficient by the federal agencies (USFS, USEPA, and WSDOE), since it relied in part on the simple passage of time and dispersal of the toxic waste, known as "source depletion and natural attenuation," which one might also interpret as 'doing nothing.' By this time another corporate change of hands had taken place, as Intalco had merged with Alumet and become the "potentially responsible party."

The operators of the Lutheran Church camp formed their own corporation, "Holden Village, Inc." and have been the most vocal, involved group of citizens in the remediation process. Their interests understandably might not be entirely the same as those of the general public, however. Primary among their concerns is minimizing impact on the regular stream of volunteers and guests who sign up sometimes years in advance to spend time there. Their goal is to keep all the remedial cleanup action limited to a two-year span, and to keep the village's operations

going, at least partially, during the impacted summers. Also they hope to achieve major infrastructure improvements while the mine remediation is taking place, and have offered to house the cleanup work crews so that separate housing isn't required, in exchange for improvements.

In September 2007 a supplemental feasibility study was released by the federal agencies, and is available online. It restated the original set of problems, showed how the previous study's alternatives were inadequate, and proposed and evaluated the merits of four new alternatives to meet the requirements of the law. So-called Alternative 11 was introduced, and remains in play today. It is the most aggressive and expensive option, including capping and regrading the tailings to prevent them from moving, building a wall to contain the water that would continue moving through them, and treating the water now pouring from the open pit-heads. Even the chalky white "ferricrete" that's accumulated in the bed of Railroad Creek would be removed.

But the current corporate entity to inherit the problem, Rio Tinto, continues to propose its own less expensive solution. Dubbed Alternative 13, it's not been made available to the public yet, though the USFS says it's "coming soon." The USFS official in charge of the cleanup said in this case, "soon" most likely meant September to November of this year. He said information gathering was continuing on site to determine if Alternative 13 is as effective as 11, despite its lower cost.

After 50 years of minimal action and 11 years of study, the Holden Mine cleanup seems likely to begin within a year. It's certain the area near the old mine will never to be returned to a truly natural state, and at best we can hope that in a few years the worst of the threats and damage will be ameliorated. Your input is needed in the negotiations between the agencies, the mining company and Holden Village this year to ensure the best outcome for the public, here in the heart of the American Alps. As NCCC moves forward with its American Alps Legacy Project, let's not forget this most glaring example of what we need to guard against, at all costs, in the future. Perhaps, at least, an interpretive display at Holden on the topic of the mine waste disaster would be appropriate to help ensure that future generations leave thinking "never again."

Meeting with new regional forester

Marc Bardsley

Members of the Board of Directors met with new Regional Forester, Mary Wagner, recently. Ms. Wagner is a native of southern California and has spent the majority of her career with the U.S. Forest Service in the western states in many leadership roles. She also spent a few years in Washington D.C., working primarily as a wilderness program administrator. She appears to understand our concerns for wilderness very well.

We discussed topics including better ways for the environmental community to communicate with Forest Service officials proactively. One of our concerns has been that we would rather not have to react to elements of a Forest Service proposal but instead would prefer to review the options

prior to the decisions about alternatives. We also discussed the status of the Northwest Forest Plan with Ms. Wagner. She sounded optimistic that the good parts of this plan will stand up to various legislative proposals. A third item discussed was the status and timing of the long-range planning process at the individual forest level.

The most specific area of discussion for the NCCC was Forest Service reaction to our American Alps Project. It was encouraging to hear that Wagner and her local colleagues are as concerned about the protection of federal lands (acknowledging their constraints), as we are and they intend to do the very best job they can to achieve protection for the land.

Lower life in higher places

John Edwards

What images come to mind when the Alpine Zone is mentioned? Snow, ice, rocks; no life. Except for visitors — perhaps a soaring raven, a rosy finch, or a few climbers. And below those airy spaces? Heather meadows leading down to forest and steams and grassy glades where animal life in many forms is abundant. Obviously birds and bears and marmots and all the other well-known

large furry and feathery things that cross our paths, but also lesser creatures, a few among them making themselves all too well known: the deer flies by day and mosquitoes by night that seek us out. And many others too — butterflies and beetles and their kin seem to be everywhere in summer. And in winter too, when, unseen by the casual visitor, many insects, spiders and their relatives thrive below the snow,

comfortably insulated by snowpack from the extremes of weather above and able, by virtue of their body chemistry, to get on with life at temperatures around freezing. They evolved various anti-freeze materials “invented” anti-freeze for our engines and they have many remarkable adaptations for life in the cold.

Continued on page 8

A grylloblattid, one of the nocturnal denizens of snowfields and glaciers in the northwest. There are only a handful of species in the entire world. They prefer temperatures a little above 0 Celsius, and die if they are cooled to a few degrees below zero, or warmed above about 10 degrees. This one is using its mouthparts to clean a foot.



A carabid beetle, another nocturnal snowfield scavenger. The carabid family is diverse and worldwide; a few among them specialize as mountaineers.

Rosy finches breed in rocky places near the alpine zone and forage on snowfields for insects to feed their young. This one was attracted to bits of my lunch at Camp Muir



Iceworms on a Mount Rainier snowfield feeding on pollen and microorganisms in the late afternoon when they swim to the surface.



Iceworms feeding at the surface of a snowfield on Mount Rainier.

Lower life, *continued from page 7*

But back up now to the alpine zone. When we travel high in the Cascades on a summer's day, most of us are totally engaged in the splendor of the scenery, and the challenges of route finding, our eyes up, scanning the topography, watching the weather, and our watch. But if we look down and scan the snow surface close around us, we may notice that it is often far from white. It may be gray from blown rock dust, it may be tinged with pink by algal blooms — masses of single-celled green algae protected from the intense solar radiation by a watermelon-colored red pigment. Imperceptibly there too is a newly detected layer of soot that plays a part in melting. And there are black specks too. Look closer and you will find that they are insects of many varieties. There are flies — midges, gnats, blowflies, daddy long legs flies, and a host of others. There are aphids and other plant bugs, beetles, little parasitic wasps, flying ants, indeed several hundreds of different species. And there are spiders, too. On a spring to early summer day on Mount Rainier there can be a total of about twelve tons of insect and spider “fallout” distributed over the snowfields and glaciers. These arthropods are the derelicts of dispersal. Most insects

have a dispersal phase in their life history, often as newly fledged winged adults. They set off for greener pastures but they are at the mercy of the winds and if they suffer the misfortune of being caught in a downdraft onto the snow where they become too cold to take wing again, they end their journey. Spiders, too; they cannot fly but they can balloon on a thread of silk paid out into the wind from a treetop or a promontory. We have studied this phenomenon of arthropod fallout in detail on Mount Rainier and on Mount St. Helens, and we know that it occurs throughout the Cascades and indeed on all temperate and tropical mountains.

What happens to all this fallout? Much of it does not go to waste. Rosy finches, water pipits and ptarmigan exploit it during their breeding season. I have seen them darting hither and yon, picking off their prey on snowfields and snowpatches all the way from California to Alaska.

They are not the only consumers. When night falls and the birds are gone another group of predators issue forth onto the snow from their daytime refuges in rock crevices. Carabid beetles trundle over the snow in search of prey, as do grylloblattids, a rare group of flightless insects

found only in cold habitats in the Northwest and in Asia near the north Pacific. But the highest permanent residents on Mount Rainier, and throughout the Cascades are phalangids (harvest men), relatives of spiders, and common in our lowland rockeries. They are a strange sight with their long filamentous legs, as they make their way over the snow until they happen upon a juicy insect corpse. Our first surveys of these nocturnal scavengers high on Mount Rainier's Muir snowfield at night alarmed the rangers who saw headlights moving about, seemingly at random, giving the impression that a party had lost its bearings. We were “rescued”, and asked to give the rangers notice when we were on our nocturnal surveys.

There are, of course, other “lower” life to be found living in the northwest mountains, and elsewhere. Some are seasonal visitors: Ladybird beetles (miscalled ladybugs) take the winter off and head for the mountains when their lowland aphid diet gives out in fall. They aggregate, sometimes in great numbers, at places in the mountains where they will be cool but well-protected by a blanket of snow throughout the winter. A good place to find them is on Burroughs Mountain on Mount Rainier.

And last but not least there are the permanent residents within glacier and snowfield ice — the iceworms. They are true annelid worms, distant relatives of garden earthworms. About a centimeter in length, they spend their entire lives at 0 degrees Celsius, immersed in the spongy watery ice of temperate glaciers and snowfields. Their cellular chemistry is so finely tuned to live in a narrow thermal window around zero that they die by freezing or self-digestion if they are cooled or warmed a few degrees from their normal environmental temperature. What do they live on? Again, it is the work of the wind, bringing pollen and nutrients which nourish microorganisms such as bacteria in surface meltwater and which form the food of the iceworms. They can be found, sometimes in large numbers — we have counted 250 in a square meter — at localized sites. What do they feed on during the winter when their watery-ice home is covered by deep snow? We don't know. Perhaps, like the ladybird beetles, they go into a hibernating, inert state. There is still lots more to learn about “lower” life in higher places!



These arachnids, distant relatives of spiders, are known as phalangids, or harvestmen. Some are common in rocky gardens but this species is a mountaineer. I have collected it at around 11,000 feet on Mount Rainier and it may be the highest permanent resident. They are nocturnal scavengers on snowfields where they feast on insects and spiders.

111th CONGRESS, 1st Session

H. R. 2806

To authorize the Secretary of the Interior to adjust the boundary of the Stephen Mather Wilderness and the North Cascades National Park in order to allow the rebuilding of a road outside of the floodplain while ensuring that there is no net loss of acreage to the Park or the Wilderness, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
June 10, 2009

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Natural Resources

A BILL

To authorize the Secretary of the Interior to adjust the boundary of the Stephen Mather Wilderness and the North Cascades National Park in order to allow the rebuilding of a road outside of the floodplain while ensuring that there is no net loss of acreage to the Park or the Wilderness, and for other purposes.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. FINDINGS.

Congress finds as follows:

(1) In 1988, 93 percent of the North Cascades National Park Complex was designated the Stephen Mather Wilderness.

(2) A road corridor was deliberately excluded from the wilderness designation to provide for the continued use and maintenance of the upper Stehekin Valley Road.

(3) The upper Stehekin Valley Road provides access to Stephen Mather Wilderness trailheads and North Cascades National Park from the Lake Chelan National Recreation Area.

(4) Record flooding in 1995 and again in 2003 caused severe damage to the upper Stehekin Valley Road and led to the closure of a 9.9-mile section of the road between Car Wash Falls and Cottonwood Camp.

(5) The National Park Service currently does not have the flexibility to rebuild the upper Stehekin Valley Road away from the Stehekin River due to the current location of the non-wilderness road corridor provided by Congress in 1988.

(6) It is a high priority that the people of the United States, including families, the disabled, and the elderly, have reasonable access to the National Parks system and their public lands.

(7) The 1995 Lake Chelan National Recreation Area General Management Plan calls for retaining vehicle access to Cottonwood Camp.

(8) Tourism associated with the North Cascades National Park Complex is an important part of the economy for rural communities in the area.

(9) Additional management flexibility would allow the National Park Service to

consider retention of the upper Stehekin Valley Road in a manner that provides for no net loss of wilderness.

SECTION 2. AUTHORIZATION FOR BOUNDARY ADJUSTMENTS.

The Washington Park Wilderness Act of 1988 (Public Law 100-668) is amended by inserting after section 206 the following:

SEC. 207. BOUNDARY ADJUSTMENTS FOR ROAD.

(a) In General- The Secretary may adjust the boundaries of the North Cascades National Park and the Stephen Mather Wilderness in order to provide a 100-foot wide corridor along which the Stehekin Valley Road may be rebuilt-

(1) outside of the floodplain between milepost 12.9 and milepost 22.8;

(2) within the boundaries of the North Cascades National Park; and

(3) outside of the boundaries of the Stephen Mather Wilderness.

(b) No Net Loss of Lands- The boundary adjustments made under this section shall be such that equal acreage amounts are exchanged between the Stephen Mather Wilderness and the North Cascades National Park, resulting in no net loss of acreage to either the Stephen Mather Wilderness or the North Cascades National Park.

Stehekin Road legislation

Representative Hastings has introduced legislation [HR 2806] that would alter the wilderness boundary in the Stehekin Valley to allow reconstruction of the Stehekin Road where it is closed above High Bridge all the way to Cottonwood Camp. The text claims that the NPS lacks flexibility to reconstruct the road but it is not the NPS that is requesting the flexibility. The NPS has repeatedly demonstrated in comprehensive road management plans that both the environmental impacts of road reconstruction are significant and so is the estimated cost [approximately 8 million]. Neither of these issues is

addressed in the legislation. NCCC has consistently supported the NPS decisions with respect to repair of flood damage to the Stehekin Road. It is now time to pursue an alternative course.

NCCC has urged the NPS to develop a Stehekin Basin management plan that would accommodate a new approach to the upper valley, e.g., handicapped hiking, non-vehicular based camping, etc. There are many opportunities to be explored. The proof of the validity of this concept is shown in that during the two years of road closures, the upper Stehekin has received visitation similar to when there

was a road, i.e., no decrease in visitation. Only a minor portion of the tourist visitation and an even smaller portion of income from tourism were traditionally generated above High Bridge even with the prior shuttle service. This alternative approach would be less costly and less environmentally damaging and continue to serve tourist access to Stehekin Valley.

—David Fluharty

Loss of NOVA funding effects Cle Elum FS District

As most everyone has heard, the new budget passed by the Washington State Legislature transfers all NOVA money, which had formerly been available for outdoor recreation grants, over to state parks. This will mean about a 70 percent cut in funding for the Cle Elum District Trails, Wilderness, and ORV programs for 2010 and 2011. This is really major. It will mean a lot less trail maintenance, and a lot less enforcement presence, plus a bunch of our employees will not have jobs next summer. But the effects of this cut will actually become noticeable this coming summer. Some of our existing NOVA grants are two-year grants, so in order to have SOME money available in 2010, we are looking at all possible ways to save NOVA money this year. By not filling some of our summer jobs, and by farming the crews out to other departments, we hope to save enough money to fund at least one trail crew and some education/enforcement folks next year. But of course this means less trail maintenance this year. In effect, we are ramping the trail program down in 2009 to make the drop-off less precipitous in 2010. We ask for everyone's patience and understanding, and of course, we thank in advance all our hard-working volunteers. I will periodically post information on Cleelumtrails.com as the situation develops, so keep an eye on that website for updates.

Tim Foss
Trails, Wilderness and ORV Manager
Cle Elum Ranger District

Forest Service authorizes cattle grazing in area near wolves

WINTHROP, June 8, 2009—Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest managers will permit cattle to graze in an area southwest of Twisp where gray wolves chose to locate a den and raise pups.

The wolves naturally dispersed to the area from Canada and are the first pack to be confirmed in Washington in more than 70 years. Their den is within an area where livestock have grazed since the early 1900s on the Methow Valley Ranger District.

Ranchers with permits to graze cattle on the allotment and others nearby agreed to several conservation measures developed by Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest managers, in coordination with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The measures include prohibiting human disturbance at den sites, removing injured livestock, and delaying release of calves until they are larger and natural prey are more plentiful.

The Forest Service is in consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, which under the 1973 Endangered Species Act must provide oversight for the wolf protection measures. Gray wolves have been a federally-listed endangered species since 1974 and it is unlawful to kill or harass them.

The ranchers also agreed to work with agencies responsible for wolf control actions. The USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife will use control measures intended to reduce risks to livestock, while not adversely affecting wolves if livestock depredation by a wolf is confirmed.

The conservation group, Defenders of Wildlife, has also offered to reimburse grazing permittees if it is determined a wolf killed livestock.

In 2008, scientists with the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest, and the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife verified the presence of what they call the "Lookout Pack." Subsequent DNA analysis

indicated the pack is most closely related to British Columbia populations.

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife biologists captured and fitted monitoring devices onto pack members last summer, with assistance from the Idaho Department of Fish and Game. Biologists with various agencies then watched the Lookout Pack's activities using monitoring devices, remote cameras and field observations.

Their work indicated the pack stayed in lower elevation areas last year until pups became mobile. Then, in mid-summer it moved to higher elevations where mule deer were more available. The wolves coexisted with cattle throughout the summer and there is no record of stock depredation by this pack, according to the biologists.

"We greatly appreciate how grazing permittees, conservation groups and various agencies are working together to protect the Lookout Pack," said Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest Resources/Planning Group Leader Stuart Woolley. "The Forest Service has a responsibility to protect these wolves and enhance their recovery. It also has a multiple-use mission that includes grazing."

Roland Giller

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Roland Giller, Okanogan-Wenatchee N.F. public affairs officer, 509-664-9314

Doug Zimmer, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, external affairs supervisor, 360-753-4370

HR 2430 RFS

AN ACT

To direct the Secretary of the Interior to continue stocking fish in certain lakes in the North Cascades National Park, Ross Lake National Recreation Area, and Lake Chelan National Recreation Area.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. FINDINGS; PURPOSE.

(a) Findings- Congress finds the following:

(1) The North Cascades complex contains 245 mountain lakes, of which 91 have been historically stocked with fish.

(2) In many cases, the stocking of fish in these lakes dates back to the 1800s.

(3) This practice has been important to the economy of the area because of the recreational opportunities it creates.

(4) During congressional hearings on the designation of the North Cascades National Park, the Department of the Interior indicated that the practice of fish stocking would be continued if the area became a unit of the National Park Service system.

(5) Since designation of the National Park in 1968, the stocking of certain lakes has continued under various agreements between the National Park Service and the State of Washington.

(6) An Environmental Impact Statement completed by the National Park Service recommends continued stocking of up to 42 of the lakes that have historically been stocked with fish.

(b) Purpose- The purpose of this Act is to clarify the continued authority of the National Park Service to allow the stocking of fish in certain lakes in the North Cascades National Park, Ross Lake National Rec-

reation Area, and Lake Chelan National Recreation Area.

SEC. 2. STOCKING OF CERTAIN LAKES IN NORTH CASCADES NATIONAL PARK, ROSS LAKE NATIONAL RECREATION AREA, AND LAKE CHELAN NATIONAL RECREATION AREA.

(a) In General- The Secretary of the Interior, acting through the Director of the National Park Service, shall authorize the stocking of fish in lakes in the North Cascades National Park, Ross Lake National Recreation Area, and Lake Chelan National Recreation Area.

(b) Conditions- The following conditions shall apply to stocking of lakes under subsection (a):

(1) The Secretary is authorized to allow stocking in not more than 42 of the 91 lakes which have historically been stocked with fish.

(2) The Secretary shall only stock fish that are—

(A) native to the watershed; or

(B) functionally sterile.

(3) The Secretary shall coordinate the stocking of fish with the State of Washington.

Passed the House of Representatives June 2, 2009.

Attest:

LORRAINE C. MILLER, Clerk

Fish Stocking to cease in North Cascades National Park

Today is July 1, 2009, the day North Cascades National Park will no longer permit fish to be stocked in high mountain lakes and begin the long process of restoration. [Fish stocking is not practiced in any other national park except a few where there are efforts to recover rare trout species]. NCCC has supported the development of this policy since it opted to push for national park status in the North Cascades. None of the high lakes in this area had fish prior to the time the practice began in the late 1800s. Fish stocking in the North Cascades began in earnest after World War II in support of expanding recreational demand. However, the introduction of invasive fish species had subtle impacts on lake ecosystems – and some significant impacts on other species like frogs and Pacific giant salamanders.

When the NPS did not address this issue in its General Management Plan process in the mid-1990s, NCCC sued to force the NPS to consider the on-going impacts of fish stocking. As part of the settlement agreement with the NPS, it was agreed that a five-year study would be made of environmental impacts of fish stocking. Well, it took almost a decade to finish the studies. And what they showed was that in many of the lakes, fish stocking altered the ecosystem significantly. Thus, the NPS developed a Mountain Lakes Fishery Management, EIS over another couple of years to inform decisions on whether or not to continue fish stocking. Approximately two years ago, the NPS issued its record of decision that called for fish stocking to cease and lake restoration to begin. However, the NPS took an unusual step to delay implementation of the decision until July 1, 2009 to allow Congress time to pass legislation clarifying its intent for fish stocking in North Cas-

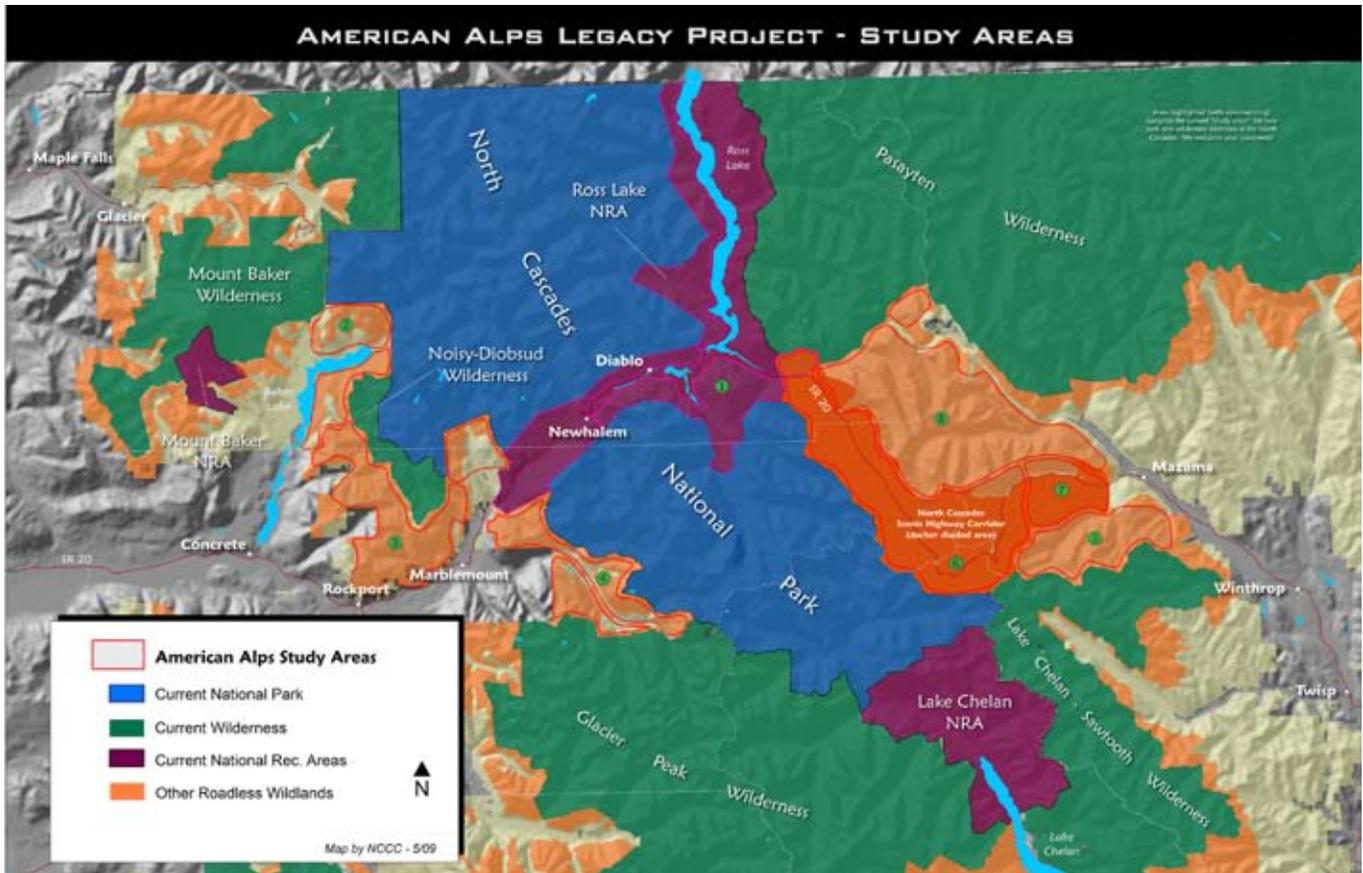
cades NP. [Proponents argued that Congress intended this while NCCC and others understood Congressional intent to not allow stocking].

Representative Hastings from North Central Washington introduced legislation that would allow fish stocking to continue. There were some measures intended to improve the results of stocking for recreational fisheries with some mitigating measures for environmental impacts. Surprisingly, five other representatives from Washington [Dicks, Larsen, Baird, Smith and McMorris-Rodgers] some of whom are both fish savvy and strong supporters of the NPS, joined in sponsoring the bill which passed out of committee last year and this year but was not acted upon in the Senate committee. While Congress could still act on this legislation, NCCC is hopeful that Senators Murray and Cantwell will support the NPS decision and not interfere legislatively.

It is NCCC's understanding that now the deadline for Congressional action has passed, the NPS intends to stop permitting the fish stocking immediately, however, resources to do active restoration of lakes are lacking. Active restoration would involve removing fish from lakes by various approaches. Instead, fishing will continue to be allowed to reduce the populations of stocked fish. Over time, because most of the lakes do not support reproduction, the fish populations will naturally die out. Based on research in Mt Rainier where introduced fish were poisoned to restore naturally fishless conditions, it has been shown that even 25 years later environmental impacts can be detected. Thus, in North Cascades NP we have a long way to go to restore lake ecosystems but now we are headed in the right direction.

—David Fluharty

American Alps Campaign goes public



American Alps Kick-Off Event a Great Success

The May 15 kick-off event for the American Alps Legacy Project was a major success. Hosted by the Mountaineers at their new facility in Magnuson Park, the event brought together some of the strongest proponents for designating new wilderness and park lands in the North Cascades.

North Cascades Conservation Council (NCCC) founders Polly Dyer, Phil Zalesky, and Patrick Goldsworthy led off the event with historical perspectives that highlighted past achievements, but clearly communicated the job is not complete. A recorded presentation by *SeattlePI.com* columnist Joel Connelly challenged the conservation community and NCCC to reach out to other user groups and fix some of the crazy park boundaries created in 1968. Ken Wilcox and Tom Hammond (NCCC board members) provided a detailed description of the American Alps Legacy Project

Study Area. Keynote speaker Art Davidson inspired the audience with his stories of efforts throughout the world to protect endangered peoples and landscapes.

Detailed maps at the event enabled participants to recommend specific portions of the study area as future park or wilderness lands. Informed feedback from these key supporters is critically important for American Alps partner organizations as we move toward a specific park/wilderness proposal in the fall. Read below on how you can contribute your knowledge to this effort.

The kick-off event also prompted excellent media coverage of the American Alps Legacy Project. Full-length articles ran in the *Seattle Times* (front page coverage), *Bellingham Herald*, *Metbow Valley News*, and *The Wenatchee World*. If you have not seen these articles, visit the new American Alps website (www.americanalps.org) for links to the articles.

American Alps Study Area Map Defined

The adjacent map shows the study area that has been defined by American Alps partner organizations to guide future discussions toward a specific park/wilderness proposal. The map is updated and revised slightly from preliminary maps displayed in previous editions of *The Wild Cascades*. The study area covers 343,000 acres, with 98,700 acres west of the park, 65,000 acres in the Ross Lake National Recreation Area, and 179,300 acres east of the park.

The existing boundaries of the North Cascades National Park and adjacent wilderness areas defy all logic. Background research and feedback from outreach meetings have guided development of the boundaries of the American Alps Study Area. There were several very important criteria for including lands in this study area.

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American Alps seeks to include low-elevation old-growth and maturing second-growth forests that were carved out of the 1968 park/wilderness bill. Long-term survival of many North Cascades wildlife species depends on permanent protection of low-elevation habitats and travel corridors. Restoring salmon and other aquatic species requires protection of low-elevation streams and rivers that are under new threats from hydropower development (watch for an article on small hydropower in the Summer-Fall issue of *The Wild Cascades*).

Preservation of the incredible scenic views along the Highway 20 corridor is essential for maintaining the high quality experience of visitors to the North Cascades. And finally, local gateway com-

munities could certainly use the economic boost that will occur if park and wilderness boundaries and associated visitor amenities are brought closer to these communities.

For a closer look at the American Alps Study Area and brief discussions of each sub-area, visit the Map Gallery found on the new American Alps website (www.americanalps.org) and review the American Alps article in the Winter 2008/2009 edition of *The Wild Cascades* (www.northcascades.org/magazine.html).

Five Month Study Period Initiated

We now need your help in refining this study area into a specific park/wilderness proposal. American Alps partner organizations will be soliciting comments from stakeholder groups and the general public

until early October 2009. We want to hear from all of you as to which study area sections would be better as park and which would be better as wilderness. We have committed to coming out with a specific proposal in the fall.

Our goal is to accommodate as many existing uses as possible, while still providing the land use management authorities that are needed to fully protect North Cascades wild areas from current and future threats. There will likely be some new restrictions associated with park or wilderness status, but most current uses can be accommodated.

Comments can be communicated via the new American Alps website (www.americanalps.org), telephone calls (360-296-5159), email (ideas@americanalps.org), local American Alps meetings and

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Mixup, Triplets and Cascade (with the ramparts of Johannesburg at right) from North Fork Cascade River road. —BOB GUNNING



(Aerial) Hidden Lakes peaks, winter, early morn. —BOB GUNNING

presentations, and at future public events planned for Bellingham and the Methow valley. Tell us what you think.

Several Proposals Have Already Been Floated for Discussion

There are already several model proposals circulating. In the waning days of the Clinton administration, a North Cascades National Monument proposal was put together that covers nearly the same lands included in the American Alps Study Area. NCCC has received multiple comments that the national monument proposal area should be converted to national park. This proposal would bring the North Cascades National Park boundaries down to Early Winters on the east side and nearly to Marblemount on the west side. Hart's Pass, Cedar Creek, Washington Pass, Baker River, Sauk Mountain, and the Cascade River valley would all be brought into permanent park protection under this proposal.

A Sampling of Comments We Have Heard Regarding Park or Wilderness Designation

Several people have told us we need to accommodate both hunting and the increasing demand for day-use hiking in the North Cascades. Hunting is allowed in wilderness areas, but not in parks. Unfortunately, there are major safety concerns when hunting occurs in the same area with high-use hiking trails. Both uses could be accommodated by designating wilderness in some areas (e.g., Golden Horn, Baker Lake) and park in other high-use areas (e.g., Highway 20 corridor, Cascade River valley). Wildlife watching is also negatively impacted when hunting overlaps with popular wildlife-viewing areas. Segregating the two uses can safely and productively meet both needs.

Mountain biking is a popular sport in the North Cascades, especially on the east side of the crest. This sport can be accommodated in parks, but it is strictly prohibited in wilderness areas. Some of the most popular mountain biking trails are adjacent to the Highway 20 corridor and would be preserved if this area was designated part of the North Cascades National Park. On the other hand, the terrain is so steep in most other parts of the study area that wilderness designation would not impact mountain biking.

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Snowmobiling is another popular sport in the North Cascades. Several people have indicated that the American Alps Legacy Project should also preserve opportunities for this motorized sport. Snowmobiles are not allowed in wilderness areas, but under some circumstances can be used in park lands. The American Alps Legacy Project has already given a nod to snowmobiles by excluding Hart's Pass and Barron mine.

Several people have commented on the crazy boundaries of the North Cascades National Park and surrounding wilderness areas. Park and wilderness designation proposals need to simplify agency management of North Cascades wild lands. We have heard that artificial cutouts like the Bacon Creek watershed should be moved into the park. We have heard that the Cascade River road should be managed by the park, since it leads to one of the most popular hiking trails in the park. Others have told us that key areas that were left out of the park to preserve options for raising Ross Dam (e.g., Big Beaver creek) or building major new dams on the Skagit river system should be included in the park, now that these hydropower projects have been abandoned.

The most frequent comment we have heard focuses on how the existing boundaries of the North Cascades National Park are not providing adequate economic benefits to gateway communities. As we have stated before in *The Wild Cascades*, most visitors to the North Cascades do not even enter the park. Currently, the Cascade River road provides the only access to park land. The North Cascades National Park is one of the few parks in the United States that does not have obvious portals that lead into the park and mark special places where visitors like to congregate. There is great demand for moving park boundaries closer to the Methow valley and Marblemount. There is also great demand for creating new facilities to meet the needs of these visitors, without compromising the beauty and wild character of these lands.

What you can do to help



Your knowledge and personal experience in the North Cascades is invaluable in helping us identify appropriate areas for park and wilderness designation in the North Cascades. We want to know what you think. Please call, write, or email your thoughts to ideas@americanalps.org.

Education and public participation are essential for the success of any park/wilderness campaign. We could use your volunteer help on this big job. Contact us to learn more details about the American Alps Study Area. Then volunteer to help educate your friends, neighbors, and colleagues. We could also use your help in identifying community organizations that would like to host a presentation or small group meeting on the American Alps Legacy Project.

Please join our American Alps email action alert system. You will be kept up-to-date on the American Alps Legacy Project. We will need your voice to speak out in the future for protecting the North Cascades. Contact us via www.americanalps.org to participate in our campaign.

Finally, it takes money to implement a major campaign like the American Alps Legacy Project. Your financial support would be very much appreciated. You can donate through the American Alps website (www.americanalps.org) or simply mail a check to the North Cascades Conservation Council, 2433 Del Campo Drive, Everett, WA 98208. Thank you.

Ragged Ridge from summit of Peak 7690. Sharp peak at left is Mesabchie (8795) —BOB GUNNING

Reprinted from the *Seattle Times*, May 20, 2009

“Parents” of North Cascades park want it to grow

Lynda V. Mapes

BAKER RIVER TRAIL, Whatcom County

As sometimes happens with parents, their work is never done — even though their offspring by now is 40 years old.

So it is for Polly Dyer and Patrick Goldsworthy, two of the parents of North Cascades National Park, who helped push for its original designation.

Now as the park turns 40, the two have kicked off a campaign with the Mountaineers, North Cascades Conservation Council and other conservation groups to finish their work, and expand the park to protect scenic landscapes not included in the original designation.

A scarf on her head and purse slung over her shoulder, Dyer, 89, last week set off down the Baker River Trail, a classic case in point. The trail and lands surrounding it are today owned by the U.S. Forest Service and do not have permanent protection, despite the old-growth cedars — some 500 years old and others even more venerable — keeping counsel by the green slide of the Baker River.

Using two hands to lift a leg over a fallen log, Dyer has never lost her passion

for hiking, or conservation. Goldsworthy, at 90, is just as committed. For many summers, he hiked in the North Cascades with his buddies, including the late hiking and trail-guide guru Harvey Manning. “I wasn’t into just mileage, I wanted to know the country,” Goldsworthy said. “We went every place you could think of, to get to know the Cascades.”

Goldsworthy fell in love with the North Cascades when he moved to Seattle from California around 1950. “I had no idea there was such a wonderful place. I fell in love with the forested mountains,” Goldsworthy said. “I thought: ‘We just have to do something to protect this.’ “

Dubbed the American Alps Legacy Project, the effort to expand the park is still in development. Maps of proposed areas for protection have been prepared, and now the conservation council and other advocates will begin reaching out to the public to see how the proposal should take final shape before it goes to Congress.

The conservation council kicked off the American Alps Legacy Project last week at the Mountaineers Club in Seattle. The project includes only federal lands; no private lands would be affected. While they are federally owned, because they are

outside the park, those lands could still be roaded, logged or mined, and their rivers dammed.

The proposal will be released in the fall.

Lands sought for protection include lowland forests and scenic areas along the North Cascades Highway between Newhalem and Washington Pass. Designation of new wilderness areas on federal lands adjacent to the North Cascades National Park also will be considered.

A new visitors center on the east side of the park is under discussion, as is construction of new trails, to build recreation opportunities that could help boost local economies in the gateway communities in the Methow and Skagit valleys.

The conservation vision extends to about 343,000 acres of land. The precise amount is still under discussion as the boundaries of the proposal are drawn. The park includes 684,000 acres today.

“It’s time to finish the work begun in 1968,” said Jim Davis, executive director for the North Cascades Conservation Council, formed as a nonprofit in 1957 to focus on creating the park.

Dyer and Goldsworthy, both founding board members, remember that even back then they knew lands were being left out that should have been protected. Those lands were left outside the park boundaries as a political necessity because of powerful logging interests, Goldsworthy said. Pushing for more might have scuttled the whole effort.

Awareness of the importance of the forested lowlands — for protection of water quality and habitat, as well as access for a longer recreation season — grew over the next 40 years, making now the time to push for protection, Davis said.

In Goldsworthy and Dyer, the expansion project has tenacious backers and lifelong evangelists for wild lands. As a former Girl Scout leader in Auburn, Dyer led her 9-year-old charges into the woods for weeklong camping trips.

“I wasn’t about crafts,” Dyer said. “Conservation. That is what I wanted them to learn.”



Camp under Hidden Lake Peaks. —BOB GUNNING

Review:

Ken Burns' National Parks film

PHIL FENNER

Ken Burns, the grand master of the documentary genre, recently appeared live in Benaroya Hall to do what he said he likes least — showing clips from his work — and what he evidently likes a lot more, speaking to a large receptive audience. Enrique Cerna, host of KCTS-9's "Connects" series, hosted the event and spoke with Burns and his film-making partner Dayton Duncan, live on stage before a packed house in the main concert hall.

North Cascades National Park Superintendent Chip Jenkins gave a short but impassioned talk before the showing, dubbing Burns' new film "a love story." Both Burns and Duncan were made honorary park rangers. "They like the hat!" Jenkins said.

The clip itself lasted a little over an hour and was a sampler of several parts of the full 12-hour, 6-part series. Burns said he hates showing clips so much that he almost decided to lock all the doors and show the whole thing that night, finishing around 7 a.m. the next morning, to one of many huge rounds of applause and laughter. His friendly personality shone through in his presentations and especially his Q and A session after the screening, reassuring us that genius and good humor do coexist in at least some very gifted individuals.

This reviewer was impressed with what he saw of the series in the excerpts chosen by Burns. The sagas of notables like John Muir are brought to life in classic Burns style, with extensive use of rarely-seen archival photos. But the stories of ordinary people, like a Japanese couple who loved Mount Rainier but were kept from it while interned during WWII, are the real joy of this film. Burns explained after the screening that many such stories came to their attention during the five years of research and filming that went into this project.

One can only look forward to seeing the whole film, and especially what mention he makes of efforts to create our newest national park, North Cascades.

Hopefully it will serve as a rallying cry to NCCC's American Alps Legacy Project initiative.

Repair of PCT in Suiattle River area recommendation

April 21, 2009

Mr. Robert Iwamoto, Forest Supervisor
c/o Dawn Erickson, Team Leader
1405 Emons Street
Darrington, Washington 98241

Re: Repair of PCT in Suiattle River Area

Dear Mr. Iwamoto,

Thank you for this opportunity to review your recent Environmental Assessment of this project. As understood, you intend to make a decision on whether to construct about 3.5 miles of trail and replace the Suiattle bridge, formerly at the "Skyline" site or decide that no action is preferable.

The North Cascades Conservation Council (NCCC) has attempted to remain consistent in its interpretation of what should be permitted in a legislated wilderness area. We understand that the public benefit of safe use of the Pacific Crest Trail is very important. In this case, we agree that the downside to construction of a new trail and bridge is less than trying to replace the old bridge at locations that will likely be damaged, etc., in the future and that could increase the damage to the environment. Consequently, we support a decision to relocate the bridge crossing and construction of connecting trail as described.

Our major concern is the excess amount of helicopter use and the unprecedented use of a mechanical excavator in the Glacier Peak Wilderness. Restricted use of a helicopter to minimize environmental damage seems reasonable and use of a mechanical rock drill, while controversial, could be interpreted to be the least intrusive way to accomplish the stated objective. Our organization takes issue with use of an excavator and helicopters for personnel transportation and for expediting schedules. It is understood that your cost estimates show that use of an excavator/helicopter to reduce labor costs could reduce the total project budget, but it seems too high a price to pay in terms of Wilderness sanctity. In addition, with the labor market being in such turmoil, it seems to make sense for you to maximize the ability to provide jobs for local residents.

Having said this, the NCCC urges you to make a decision in favor of protecting the Glacier Peak Wilderness as was originally intended by the Wilderness Act. We favor Alternative 3, which basically would expedite the project with minimal use of helicopters and rock drills. Additional labor hours would be required including time camping in the area. We feel this is preferable to the precedent setting use of chainsaws, mechanical excavators, and maximum helicopter uses.

Thank you for your attention and we look forward to reviewing your Notice of Decision.

Sincerely Yours,
Marc Bardsley,
President NCCC

Goldmark echoes Sutherland at Blanchard Mountain

Only a few months into his new job, Washington's Commissioner of Public Lands, Peter Goldmark, has been an unexpected disappointment for conservationists. To be fair, this may have more to do with the outdated advice he's getting from entrenched bureaucrats than from a lack of interest in being a strong environmental leader for our state's resources.

One example was a recent attempt by the commissioner and his staff to burden taxpayers with the costs to industry of complying with new stream buffer requirements. The proposal would have set an undesirable precedent, to say the least. The Washington Forest Law Center (WFLC) and others immediately sounded the alarm and mustered considerable resistance to the proposal within the state legislature. To his credit, Goldmark backed off.

Another Goldmark fizzle is stewing at Blanchard Mountain, near Bellingham, where the North Cascades Conservation Council (NCCC) and the Chuckanut Conservancy won a major court victory in July 2008 requiring the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to complete a full environmental impact statement (EIS) on its logging plans.

The Blanchard State Forest, as it's known by the DNR, contains, by far, the largest unprotected block of maturing coastal forest still left in the greater Puget Sound region. It's just the kind of forest that global warming experts say should be preserved more widely to help capture and store carbon, while reducing outputs of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases into the atmosphere.

Despite a severe budget crunch, the state is spending public tax dollars fighting the Blanchard battle in court, rather than working toward an amicable settlement of the lawsuit. To date, Goldmark has not intervened in the debate, nor has he exerted the kind of green leadership that was promised during the election campaign.

A state conservation leader wrote in May that Goldmark's performance has been "incredibly disappointing to enviros, who



The view from Blanchard Mountain along the Pacific Northwest National Scenic Trail. —KEN WILCOX

are sensibly feeling betrayed by [these] 'Trojan Horse' actions." He added that Goldmark ousted former commissioner Doug Sutherland by an extremely narrow margin last fall, "thanks to the very people he seems to be turning his back on now."

The latest round at Blanchard Mountain began last December when Sutherland, just before departing from Olympia, filed an appeal of the lower court's decision. Goldmark, or perhaps his advisors, has been unwilling to withdraw that appeal or place it on hold while the parties discuss a potential settlement. As a result, scarce resources are being spent by the state to prolong litigation, thereby forcing conservationists to continue defending the mountain in court. And the Sutherland plan to accelerate logging across 3,200 acres — about two-thirds of the mountain — remains intact.

Or does it? The DNR's lawyers from the state Attorney General's office insist they can simply toss the plan in the trash can to get around the EIS requirement. With no plan in place, the agency could then return to business-as-usual, which could mean constructing miles of logging roads this year or next and leveling as much or more timber than the excessive levels called for in the Sutherland plan.

Much is at stake here. If Goldmark chooses not to act, Blanchard Mountain's roadless character, extraordinarily unique in the Puget Sound region, will be lost.

The impacts will be severe for the landscape as a whole and will be immediately felt by tens of thousands of trail users annually. Together with neighboring Larrabee State Park, Blanchard Mountain has been called "Issaquah Alps by the Sea." With nearly twenty miles of trails currently, and plans in place for at least ten miles of new trails, it is the most heavily used year-round trail system in Northwest Washington.

And these aren't just any old trails in the woods. The five-star hike to Oyster Dome is well known from Seattle to Vancouver. The classic view from the top of a 300-foot cliff would be

marred by new roads and logging nearby. A portion of the newly christened Pacific Northwest National Scenic Trail, extending 1,200 miles from the Pacific Ocean to the Continental Divide, cuts through the heart of the Blanchard State Forest. The trail passes through areas the DNR intended to log last year, had NCCC and others not slowed the Sutherland juggernaut. Several other trails, including more than a mile of the Lily and Lizard Lakes Trail, perhaps the most prized forest hike on the mountain, are also on the chopping block.

Unimpressed, the old guard at DNR seem to have their heels dug in, apparently believing they can bully their way around the NCCC's court victory. In a time when many timber companies are willing to work with conservationists, the DNR has been unwilling to budge.

As an example, the Sutherland plan called for barely a shoestring connection between a proposed "core area" on Blanchard and a 2,000-acre wildland within Larrabee State Park immediately to the northwest. This corridor is undoubtedly the best opportunity in the Chuckanut mountains to secure significant habitat connectivity between two relatively large wild areas. The issue was left entirely unaddressed in the Sutherland plan.

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It is also notable that a 2002 economic study of Blanchard Mountain, co-sponsored by DNR and Conservation Northwest, seems to have underestimated, by millions of dollars, the annual benefits to the local economy of not logging such a large portion of the mountain. The study narrowly considered recreational use by counting trail users during a time when the principal access road, Chuckanut Drive, was closed for construction. A long list of non-timber-related economic values were simply excluded from the study.

This spring, the Chuckanut Conservancy commissioned a brief economic overview by Earth Economics of Seattle, which found that when direct and indirect economic benefits, such as ecosystem services (like clean water and carbon sequestration), enhanced property values, expenditures by recreationists, and associated tax revenues are taken into account, not logging Blanchard Mountain may be contributing more than \$13.7 million in economic benefits each year. By contrast, timber revenues from Blanchard, after expenses, would likely be less than a half-million dollars per year, according to the DNR's own figures.

The argument is often made that our schools depend on these timber dollars to build new infrastructure. Yet the Bow-Edison School District, the largest single beneficiary of timber revenue from Blanchard State Forest, would barely receive enough money to paint a new gymnasium, let alone build it. Even in good times, timber revenue for the school district has been in the range of about one-quarter of one percent of the annual operating budget. Adding one or two cents to a typical two-dollar construction levy would more than make up for the timber revenue coming off of Blanchard Mountain. Yet conservationists are not asking the DNR to suspend all logging. They are, however, asking for better protection of the environment and the trail system.

As an aside, it is interesting that Bill Wallace, the head of the DNR's Northwest Region, was recently elected to the Bow-Edison School Board, so that he now serves on both the money-producing and money-spending ends of the revenue stream. Wallace has been centrally

involved in the Sutherland plan from the start. At a hearing on a proposed Chuckanut Mountains Park District last year, Wallace testified that the group behind that effort was opposed to all logging on Blanchard Mountain, which was not only incorrect, but further underscored the DNR's steadfast opposition to increased protection on the mountain.

NCCC's attorneys have made multiple attempts since January to encourage Goldmark and his staff to engage in meaningful settlement talks, but without success. One might hope that with Goldmark's impeccable scientific credentials (he holds a PhD in molecular biology), he could craft a sensible path to resolving the debate at Blanchard Mountain. Instead, the agency has virtually turned its back on good science and is relying on a purely political process that led to adoption of the Sutherland logging plan almost two years ago.

We can all appreciate that the new commissioner has his hands full with a wide range of important issues, but prolonging the court battle seems not the best way to make this particular headache go away. It's a hopeful sign that Goldmark claims he wants all voices to be heard, that he wants public resources and the natural environment to be well cared for. The real test is whether he can put those grand intentions to work where it counts.

If he's successful, he'll have plenty of support along the way. The NCCC, Sierra Club, North Cascades Audubon Society, Bellingham Mountaineers, Coast Watch Society, Chuckanut Conservancy and other groups are all on record as opposing the Sutherland plan for Blanchard Mountain, including the crudely defined core area (which incidentally would be available to limited logging and road-building). All of these groups were excluded from the panel that was originally assembled by Sutherland to hammer out a solution to the two-decade-long debate. Goldmark needs to rectify this inequity.

Much data and most of the scientists and other experts in the region who know the issues best were also left out of the process. Though concerned citizens submitted hundreds of thoughtful comments on the plan, none were incorporated in the final draft. By all appearances, the process ended with a preordained outcome, one that even the court found objectionable

when it ruled that the DNR failed to consider the probable environmental impacts of the plan. Goldmark could fix this.

As DNR's attorneys have suggested, tossing the Sutherland plan in the trash can might be warranted, but not if it means increased logging and road-building on the mountain. Rather, such a move could provide the opening that is needed to develop a science-based plan that responsibly protects much of the mountain. Such a plan could also accommodate a viable working forest, while providing a hedge against forest land conversion and urban sprawl, worthy objectives that have been all abuzz among state lands advocates in recent years. Such a plan would likely enjoy broad public support and could finally end the debate over Blanchard Mountain.

Blanchard Mountain, as *PI* columnist Joel Connelly wrote in 2008, is "worth fighting for." It is the only place in the Cascade Range where substantial foothills extend all the way to saltwater. It harbors the only known coastal nesting habitat in the Puget Sound region for threatened marbled murrelets. The area offers one of the best coastal launch sites in the state for hang-gliders and para-gliders. It is adjacent to two of the state's fastest growing urban centers, including a population of a quarter-million within a ten-mile commuting radius. In fifty years, it could be the last, largest and best example of what the Puget lowlands were really like before we mucked it all up with pavement and strip malls. It's a gorgeous place. And you can see it from space.

The superlatives ought to mean something.

For more information on Blanchard Mountain or to contribute to the cause, please visit www.chuckanutconservancy.org.

Commissioner of Public Lands Peter Goldmark can be reached at (360) 902-1004, or by email at cpl@dnr.wa.gov.

Reiter Forest update

THOM PETERS



The Reiter Foothills area, Department of Natural Resources (DNR) land, is located north of the Skykomish River between Gold Bar and Index, and adjacent to the Wild Sky Wilderness to the east and Wallace Falls State Park to the west.

The last Reiter Foothills Recreation Planning Committee meeting took place on May 20, 2009. The DNR proposed two draft planning maps for the area for discussion purposes only. These are maps of multiple ideas that have been suggested by committee members at earlier planning meetings. These suggestions are not approved by the agency or agreed to by the planning committee.

Concept map “D” is favored by those of us who represent the environmental community. It proposes approximately 1,090 acres for non-motorized areas, and approximately 1,040 acres for motorized

areas and appears more balanced in its approach. The entire Reiter Foothills area is approximately 10,000 acres.

Concept map “E” proposes 830 acres for non-motorized areas and 1,040 acres for motorized areas.

One of the main distinctions between the two maps is “D” provides separate trailheads for non-motorized and motorized trails, whereas map “E” combines the two.

It needs to be emphasized that the motorized community is not happy about either proposal. They obviously prefer the status quo of the “Wild West” atmosphere that has been going on for decades in the area.

The public will have an opportunity to become involved and provide comments this July when DNR intends to publish their proposed alternatives in complying with the State Environmental Policy Act

(SEPA). SEPA is a state policy that requires state and local agencies to consider the likely environmental consequences of a proposal before approving or denying the proposal.

Other proposed objectives and strategies for improving and restoring Reiter Foothills include:

- Initiate an education and enforcement strategy prior to development using methods such as gate management, a strategy for keeping users on trails, and enforcement patrols by motorcycles.
- Provide positive sign messaging that communicates information related to trail closures including why specific enforcement or management activities are taking place.
- Pursue additional opportunities to partner with enforcement personnel

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DNR to close some ORV trails in Reiter Foothills

Closures will be near stream crossings

June 17, 2009

OLYMPIA – This weekend, the Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) will begin closing some of the off-road vehicle (ORV) trails in Reiter Foothills. The measures are necessary to reduce the loss of fish habitat and to protect downstream health.

ORV riding will still be allowed in many areas, specifically in places that are being considered as potential riding areas under a recreation plan for Reiter due out this summer.

Over the years, ORV riders have created their own trails in the Reiter area without getting permission from DNR and other landowners. Some of these trails pass around and through streams, causing silt to accumulate in stream beds. As a result, many of the streams in the area have experienced significant environmental damage.

“We know these trail closures will be a concern to the ORV community,” said Bill Wallace, Manager of DNR’s Northwest Region. “There aren’t many places for people to ride in this state as it is. However, DNR has an obligation to keep the forests it manages healthy.”

DNR staff are committed to working with the local user groups to transition the Reiter area from an unsanctioned recreational facility to a sanctioned facility that meets environmental standards and provides users with a safe, enjoyable and sustainable recreational experience.

Closure schedule

- Effective June 19, all trails north of May Creek and south of the Deer Creek crossings will be closed.
- Effective July 15, all trails in a small area north and west of Hogarty Creek will be closed.

For a map of the area and the trails to be closed, go to: www.dnr.wa.gov/Publications/amp_rec_reiter_interim_strategies_map06-09.pdf.

Long-term plan for Reiter due out this summer

The ORV trail closures are part of an ongoing education and awareness

campaign. For the last year, DNR and a special citizens’ advisory committee have been working on the plan. The committee consists of representatives from diverse user groups and local community members. These individuals worked collaboratively to come up with recommendations based on the best available science. Later this summer, DNR will have a recreation plan that will guide the management of recreation in Reiter Foothills.

The public will be able to comment on a draft of the report when it goes through the SEPA (State Environmental Policy Act) review process.

For more information about Reiter Foothills, contact DNR Northwest Region Office staff: Candace Johnson at 360-854-2803 or reiterfoothills@dnr.wa.gov.

Recreation on DNR-managed lands DNR manages more than 5 million acres of state-owned forest, aquatic, agricultural, conservation and urban lands. Most recreation on these lands takes place in the 2.2 million acres of forests that DNR manages as state trust lands. By law, state trust lands are managed to produce income for schools, universities, prisons, state mental hospitals, community colleges, local services in many counties, and the state’s general fund. State trust lands are also managed to provide fish and wildlife habitat and educational and recreational opportunities.

DNR-managed lands provide 1,100 miles of trails, 143 recreation sites, and a variety of landscapes throughout Washington State. Recreational opportunities include hiking, hunting, fishing, horseback riding, camping, motorized vehicle riding, mountain biking, and boating.

DNR’s main recreation focus is to provide trails, trailhead facilities, and a primitive experience in a natural setting.

Media Contact: Toni Droscher, Communications and Outreach Specialist, 360-485-3406 (mobile), and toni.droscher@dnr.wa.gov

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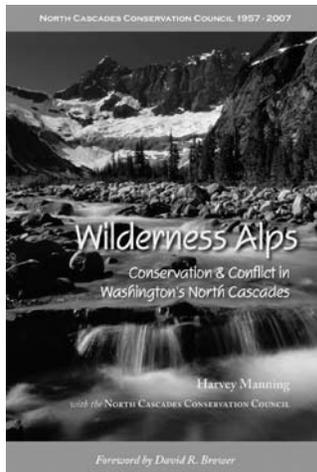
from adjacent municipalities, U.S. Forest Service, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Snohomish County, and Snohomish County Sheriff’s Office.

- Assess feasibility of a campground designed for motorized use in a location adjoining the motorized trail system.
- Develop a protection strategy for aquifer recharge protection areas (Index aquifer recharge area).
- Encourage separation of recreation uses through campground and facility design (i.e., facilities designed specifically for equestrian, motorized and non-motorized users, and day-use versus overnight use).
- Design all trails to have bridges or culverts at stream crossings.
- Consider a vehicle width limitation for motorized vehicles on trails.
- Utilize seasonal trail closures to minimize potential environmental impact.
- Consider the provision of motorized use areas for children and novice riders adjacent to motorized facilities to facilitate safe supervision.

The following actions have recently been put into effect:

- Camping is allowed in two temporarily designated areas in the gravel pit and the upper staging area.
- Sani-cans have been installed in the designated temporary camping areas.
- Off-road use is limited to daylight hours only.
- Officers and DNR staff will be issuing citations instead of warnings for illegal activities.
- DNR staff posted more signs to clearly indicate areas that are not trails and where off-road use cannot occur.
- And last but not least, the gate to DNR’s May Creek Mainline Road has been permanently closed to street vehicles.

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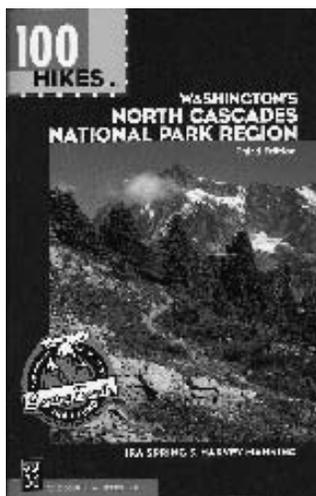
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