

THE WILD CASCADES

THE JOURNAL OF THE NORTH CASCADES CONSERVATION COUNCIL

SPRING/SUMMER 2017



Celebrating
60 years

THE WILD CASCADES ■ Spring/Summer 2017

- 3 **President's report** — Tom Hammond
- 4 **MBS meeting focuses on "temporary" Monte Cristo Road**
— Ed Henderson
- 5 **Unpoached: Protecting the North Cascades — A utopia no more**
— Shane Jones, reprinted from the *UW Daily*
- 6 **Introducing new board member David Gladstone**
Chelan meeting shows happy motoring dreams linger for Stehekin
Reader approval
- 7 **A good burn: The South Fork Cascade River fire, 14 years later** — Phil Fenner
- 8 **Corvid's eye**
- 9 **Whitebark pine: Jewel of the alpine** — Art Kruckeberg (written in 1998)
- 10 **Earth Day 2017: Celebrating 60 years of the North Cascades Conservation Council in North Cascades National Park** — Tom Hammond
- 12 **Remembering Charles Ehlert, 1937-2017**
- 14 **Mike Lowry: a remembrance** — Lynne Corne and Rick McGuire
- 15 **North Cascades Conservation Council celebrating 60 years**
- 16 **Of grizzly bears and big spaces** — Rick McGuire
Last minute change to grizzly EIS comment
- 17 **New clearcutting** — Bruce Barnbaum
- 18 **A hidden history — What might have been: The Ice Peaks National Park proposal** — Phil Fenner and Rick McGuire
- 20 **The plight of the Cascade red fox** — Ivy Terry, Emily Newell, Suzannah Yu, Tyler Haas, Kyle Barry, and Patrick Kuo
- 23 **Yes, Hugh Jackman, there really are wolverines**
Membership application

COVER: Fremont Glacier, Lake Chelan region, looking west from Cloudy Pass, head of North Fork Bridge Creek. —L.D. Lindsley photo, from the 1937 Photographic Supplement to the Ice Peaks Park Proposal.

The Wild Cascades

Journal of the North Cascades Conservation Council

EDITOR: Anne Basye

EDITORIAL BOARD: Philip Fenner, Anders Forsgaard,
Tom Hammond, and Rick McGuire

Printing by Abracadabra Printing | Pat Hutson, Designer

The Wild Cascades is published three times a year (Winter, Spring/Summer, Fall).

Letters, comments, and articles are invited, subject to editorial review.

The Wild Cascades Editor

wildcascades@northcascades.org

North Cascades Conservation Council

PO Box 95980, University Station, Seattle, WA 98145-2980

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, N3C keeps government officials, environmental organizations, and the general public informed about issues affecting the Greater North Cascades Ecosystem. Action is pursued through administrative, legal, and public participation channels to protect the lands, waters, plants and wildlife.

Over the past half century N3C 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.

N3C 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.

**North Cascades
Conservation Council
P.O. Box 95980
University Station
Seattle, WA 98145-2980**

**N3C Website
www.northcascades.org**

N3C Board

Officers

PRESIDENT

Tom Hammond

VICE PRESIDENT

Carolyn McConnell

TREASURER

Tom Brucker

SECRETARY

Marc Bardsley

Other Directors

Scott Crain

Philip Fenner

Dave Fluharty

Anders Forsgaard

David Gladstone

Ed Henderson

Rick McGuire

Thom Peters

Thom Schroeder

Advisors

Karl Forsgaard

Kevin Geraghty

Fayette Krause

Dave LeBlanc



NORTH CASCADES CONSERVATION COUNCIL

Founded in 1957

SEATTLE, WASHINGTON

THE PRESIDENT'S REPORT SPRING/SUMMER 2017

Last year we celebrated the 100th anniversary of the National Park Service. As well, we celebrated the lives of many conservation giants—the founders of the N3C. This year we celebrate the 60th anniversary of the North Cascades Conservation Council and in this edition, the life of another big contributor to the N3C and the conservation community at large—Charles Ehler. As you'll see on page 12, Charles was the epitome of an effective advocate for the North Cascades and I am thankful to have shared many a meal and story with him.

As I noted in my previous report, now is the time to become more involved in the health of our planet, particularly as it applies to the North Cascades. To that end, please join me in welcoming our newest board member: David Gladstone. David sees the threats and has responded in the most meaningful way: with his time and energy, and for that we are thankful.

The best way we can celebrate 60 years of putting action to the concept of conservation is to keep doing just that. The assaults by the Trump administration on the very life support systems of our planet are manifest within the first three months of this ill-gotten presidential term. While it is not the nature of N3C or myself to be partisan, the fact is that this administration, and many “representatives” in western states continue to play up the false dichotomy of “environment vs. jobs”. This canard has been proven just that: a falsehood that misleads and misdirects peoples' genuine desire to earn a living. Truth is there are more, more higher paying, and more sustainable jobs in clean energy than in extractive endeavors. As Elon Musk of Tesla electric cars and SpaceX has noted (I'm paraphrasing) “...if I had wanted subsidies, I would have gone in to oil—they get about \$20 billion a year...” Science, speaking truth to power, and advocacy for our planet in meaningful ways are the order of the day, and the board of the N3C will do our best to ensure that local, state and federal agencies involved with the North Cascades comply with laws and common sense to ensure the best outcome for the ecosystem.

An excellent example of this can be seen with our efforts to encourage the US Forest Service to mitigate the impacts of the Monte Cristo mine remediation road, especially considering it is in an inventoried roadless area (IRA). We're also monitoring efforts to log the South Fork of the Stillaguamish, the Sauk River below Barlow Pass and surrounding areas. As well, any consideration of paving the Mountain Loop Scenic Byway should be shelved, since you can be assured the N3C will not sit quietly by for such a blatant abuse of taxpayer dollars. Travel management plans continue to be refined on both the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest and sections of the Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest, and N3C is right in the thick of that. The N3C might not have big public events or fundraisers, but you can bet we're on the mission of protecting our homeland—our beloved North Cascades.

MBS meeting focuses on “temporary” Monte Cristo Road

By Ed Henderson

The major CERCLA (Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act—e.g. the EPA Superfund) construction work to remove mine waste to a prepared repository at the Monte Cristo town site was completed in 2015 and the area returned to the local control of the Darrington Ranger District (see *TWC* Fall 2016). The rudimentary “pioneer” road built in an Inventoried Roadless Area (IRA) to provide access for the heavy earth-moving construction equipment remains in place.

The North Cascade Conservation Council believes this road should be removed from the IRA and obliterated when the CERCLA work is completed. To discuss our concerns, a delegation from N3C met with Mount Baker Snoqualmie National Forest (MBS) Staff in Everett on April 18.

After introductions, the meeting started with a review of the history of the Monte Cristo mining industry, the railroad and Snohomish County Mine to Market road, the WEC law suit and Court Ordered CERCLA mine remediation, the washout of the existing county road, Secretary of Agriculture Vilsack’s Memo, and MBS’s Removal Action Memorandum (RAM) to construct a temporary road through the IRA to allow access to the town site for heavy earth-moving construction equipment. N3C pointed out that the RAM clearly stated that the public was not to be allowed to use the temporary road and that it had deliberately been built below Forest Service’s maintenance level 2 (high-clearance 4WD vehicles) standards.

N3C stated our position that the temporary access road is to be only used for work, including revegetation and monitoring as part of the CERCLA mine remediation and is to be obliterated when the remediation is complete.

MBS provided the following comments and stated positions:

- While MBS had no obligation to provide motor vehicle access to the property in-holders when the county road washed out, now that the tem-



MBS is not prepared to initiate a NEPA but agreed to hold public workshops to identify possible alternatives and the scope of issues.

porary road exists they feel that as a “good neighbor” they must allow the in-holders some limited motor vehicle access.

- The CERCLA cleanup will require motor vehicle access for monitoring for at least five years, until 2020.
- Funds from CERCLA and the mining company ASARCO paid for the repairs to the temporary access road following the 2016 spring melt/runoff. These consisted of installing a 60-inch corrugated metal culvert at station ~60+ on the road in the IRA and building a bypass around a washout on the old Snohomish county road caused by a meander of the Sauk River. [The CERCLA/ASARCO funds will provide for maintenance of the temporary access road for as long as it is needed for monitoring. However it will not be available for maintenance cost once the monitoring phase is complete.]
- The Washington State Department of Ecology has some responsibility for monitoring the site but has not been

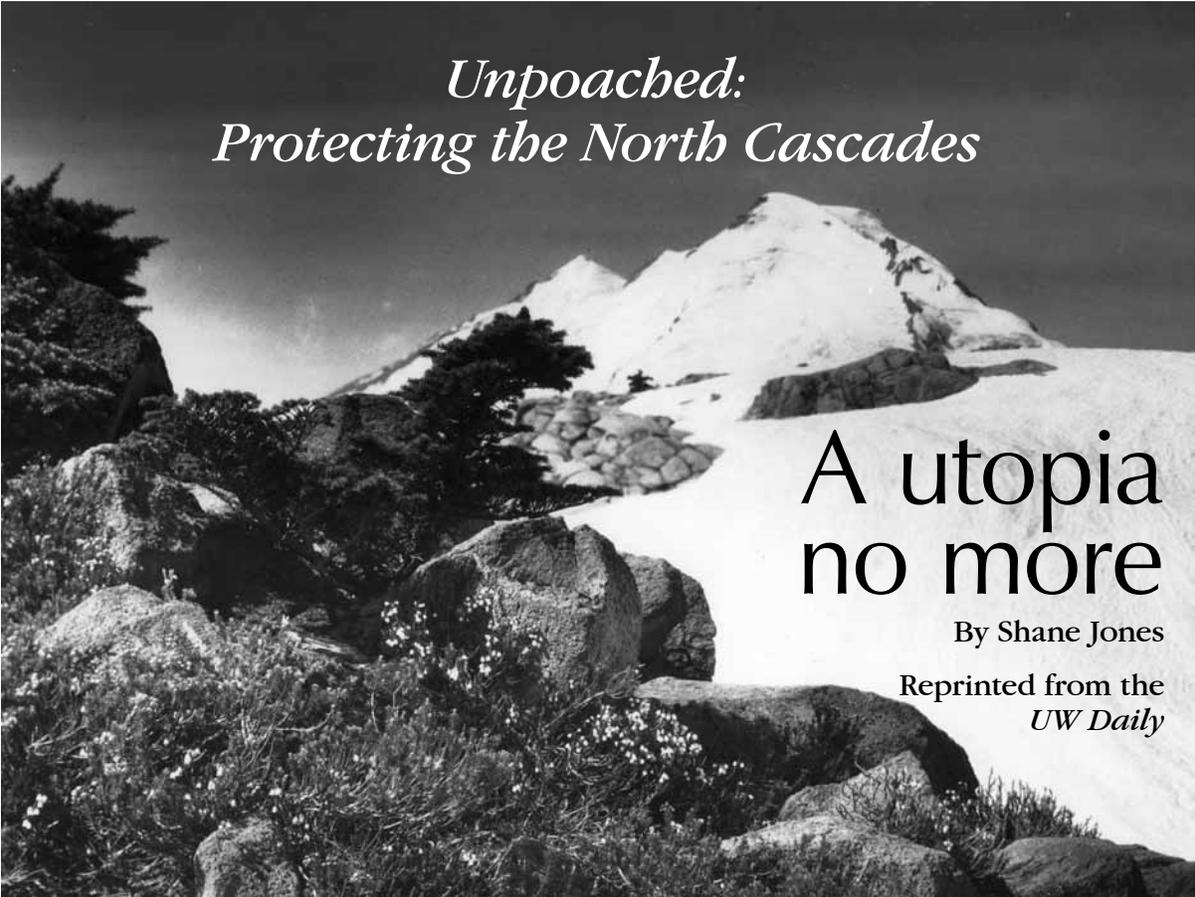
active to date. They will have to be involved before closure of the temporary road is carried out.

- MBS is not prepared at this time to initiate a NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act) process. They don’t have a preferred alternative nor have they identified a scope. MBS agreed to start a series of public workshops to identify possible alternatives and the scope of issues to be addressed in the NEPA process.

- MBS stated that if the public were allowed to use the temporary access road it would have to be upgraded. MBS will prepare an estimate of the necessary work and required budget to present in the public workshops.

- MBS will investigate the legal requirements and permits for retaining the temporary access road in the IRA and opening it to even limited public access.
- MBS stated that the temporary access road provides convenient motor vehicle access for administration of the Forest Service facilities. The FS has a campground and a pit toilet in the townsite. In the past they have had to fly in a pump and barrels to pump and fly out the effluent.
- MBS at the Darrington Ranger District is checking out gate keys to the property in-holders on a 48-hour loan. The keys require a written application from known in-holders. Following N3C’s recommendation, the application will be rewritten to make clear that this is a temporary arrangement until the ultimate decision for use of the road is made via the NEPA process or otherwise. (N3C expects that the Darrington Ranger District will maintain a log of all key loans to build a record of use over the summer months when the road is passable.)

N3C will continue to monitor the status of the temporary access road and looks forward to participating in the public workshops to determine whether or not a NEPA process is appropriate.



Unpoached: Protecting the North Cascades

A utopia no more

By Shane Jones

Reprinted from the
UW Daily

Piercing, snow-laden mountain tops, plush greenery stretching out for miles, winding streams running to meet still crystal lakes — the North Cascades mountain range is a utopia for the ecosystems and wildlife that inhabit it. But that utopia is in danger of being obliterated by the clear-cutting and mining of nearly 200,000 acres of unprotected land.

The North Cascades National Park is safe-guarded against these dangers by the Wilderness Act and the National Parks and Wildlife Act, but much of the Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest and Skagit River valley that surround the park aren't so lucky.

The Skagit River is home to a species of Chinook salmon which is currently endangered. The river meanders throughout the mountain range, near mineral deposits which advertise themselves as gems to be exploited by miners. The only problem is, the mining of these deposits poses a serious threat to the survival of the Chinook species. In order to obtain these minerals, miners upturn soil by either stripping it of its inhabitants (trees, vegetation) or dissolving materials in order to extract the needed minerals. While this process seems all well and good, unfortunately the runoff that results can seep into the very

ivers that the Chinook species inhabit. Salmon are suffocated, blocked, and choked off from the rivers they call home.

Chinook salmon spawn on both sides of the Cascade range and complete their annual trip upstream as the cycle repeats. These fish use the rivers as their roads, and their destruction has made it so the salmon can't reproduce. When they can't reproduce, the survival of their species invariably suffers, hence "endangered."

So I'm going to point my finger at the ignorance and self-absorption of human beings for causing of all this. A species can only survive as long as there are resources available to sustain its growing population, but apparently, the human species is the only one that exists on planet Earth. We devour our resources and ecosystems like insatiable gluttons, assuming that no matter how fast we shove it all down our throats, something will inevitably spring back in its place.

"The Lion King" didn't introduce us to "the Circle of Life" for nothing. In order for the circle to remain in rotation, predators must eat prey. We have decided to ignore the circle and instead construct a pyramid on which we perch at the top. We aren't just the predators; we eat (and by eat I mean destroy) all other predators,

their prey, and the rest of the habitats of the world. A pyramid cannot remain standing without its base, so ultimately our naively built pyramid will crumble.

We will be the agents of our own extinction. Think about that for a moment.

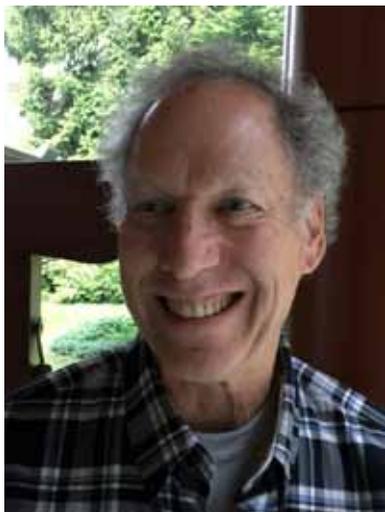
If we keep treating ecosystems like the North Cascades as if they are expendable, then we will be left with nothing. The North Cascades Conservation Council is urging Congress to further protect this majestic, invaluable land. We cannot simply hope the government steps in and mitigates these dire environmental situations. We must join groups like NCCC, form petitions, write letters, create campaigns, and most of all educate ourselves on the issues that live in our own backyard.

Why do thousands of people every year flock to the North Cascades to hike its trails and observe its wildlife? Because they want to experience the unadulterated purity of nature — purity that will no longer exist if we keep this up.

Mt. Baker from Kulsan Ridge looking southwest. L.D. Lindsley photo, from the Photographic Supplement to the Ice Peaks Park Proposal 1937.

Chelan meeting shows happy motoring dreams linger for Stehekin

Introducing new board member David Gladstone



David Gladstone was born in eastern Washington and moved to the east coast when very young, where he went to school. He moved back to Washington permanently in 1971. After a 27-year career as an actuarial consultant, he and his wife Melinda started a nonprofit foundation in 1999, whose major purpose was to buy and protect land, primarily forest land, from development. Over the last 18 years, David and Melinda have rehabilitated more than 5400 acres in Snohomish, Island and Okanogan counties, including the planting of more than 40,000 trees. The goal is to make each property an old-growth wildlife sanctuary. David is also an attorney and a consulting board member of Pilchuck Audubon Society. He likes to garden, ski and hike, preferably with one or more of his and Melinda's four grandchildren.

Readers of *The Wild Cascades* will likely know that there are still those who dream of driving far up the Stehekin valley. After countless storms, washouts, and repairs, the National Park Service (NPS) finally gave up on supporting this effort, after several especially powerful floods simply erased most of the upper Stehekin road in 2006. But some still fondly remember the days when one could drive another 11 miles all the way to Cottonwood Camp, practically at the eastern foot of Cascade Pass, and want to do so again, seemingly at any cost to the Federal government.

There were also those who dreamed of a road right over Cascade Pass to Marblemount, thus turning the dream of driving right to Stehekin into a reality. Others pushed for a road down Bridge Creek from near Rainy Pass. Had any of these schemes come to fruition, the Stehekin valley would be a far different place today.

Fortunately the Stehekin valley has escaped the onslaught of car-driven development that has desecrated countless other beauty spots, and destroyed the very qualities that first drew people to them. The Stehekin valley is still mostly "like it was", and it has survived that way only because you can't drive there.

Although the boosters seem to have given up, for now, on building a road from the rest of America to Stehekin, they are still trying to rebuild the old Stehekin road into the upper valley. After all those years of washouts and attempts to repair them, the NPS finally admitted in 2006 that keeping a driveable road up the valley beyond Car Wash Falls just can't be done. Much of the route that the old road once traversed is now occupied by the Stehekin River. Any new road to Cottonwood Camp would need to follow an entirely new route, and construction costs would likely run 5 to 10 million dollars minimum, based on modest estimates a decade old.

Ever more thinly stretched budgets mean the likelihood of the Park Service ever coming up with such a staggering sum for just one fairly short road from nowhere to nowhere is next to zero. But there are those, mostly in Chelan and Stehekin, who just won't give up. They continue to besiege Congress to conjure up the money to build a new road into the

upper Stehekin valley. This money would need to be found just as the U.S. government debt passes \$20 trillion dollars and countless bridges, dams, pension funds and other necessities of life teeter on the brink of collapse.

Representative Dave Reichert recently called a meeting in Chelan to allow people to air their desires and concerns. Staff of Reichert's and Senator Maria Cantwell's office were in attendance as NPS staff members listened to pleas from Chelan and Stehekin residents who want to drive farther up the landlocked Stehekin road, as well as those (such as N3C and NPCA) who think the idea of a new road is just crazy.

As part of the routine sausage-making that goes on in Washington D.C. toward the end of every Congressional session, a deal was struck in late 2014. In exchange for allowing Senator Murray's bill adding

CONTINUED ON PAGE 15

Reader approval

Phil — I suspect that you are behind scanning all of the back issues of *The Wild Cascades* and getting them on line. I have spent too much time reading the old ones lately! I first discovered them in the basement of the Forestry Library in the mid-70s and got caught up on a lot of the history up to that point. I don't think that you could check them out and so you had to read them there. So it's been great being able to re-read all of the old stuff. Pulled out a few articles on Kennecott which I shared with a bunch of Forest Service and National Park Service folks on a field trip up the Suiattle a couple weeks ago. Thanks for providing this great, and unbiased historical research resource!"



—Gary Paull, N3C member

Fire! Whoever shouts it in a theater is a criminal if it's not real. Why? Because it causes panic. "Fire is your best friend and your worst enemy," as my Scoutmaster would always say. And of course "Only You..." we were told, could prevent the nasty ones that burned Bambi's mother. The anti-fire propaganda machine personified by Smokey has been churning out this media campaign for quite a while. Fire is associated with eternal damnation in Judeo-Christian theology, with its roots in the Greek myths. The 100 year era of fire suppression here has led in turn to the era of megafires.

We're lucky to not feel threatened by fire very often on the wet west side of the Cascades; perhaps that allows some of us to try to see it in different ways than simply as evil to be stopped at all costs. We may even think we're immune to fire over here in the land of rot and moss, but not so. That random force of natural ignition, lightning, strikes here too and sometimes even wet side forests start to burn, especially during summer dry spells. Anybody who's seen one of those huge ancient trees deep in Wilderness, split in half and blackened, can attest to the fact that lightning hits the west side occasionally, too, but usually the surroundings are too damp to do much more than smolder.

The exceptions are pretty dramatic. The big blackened area north of the Hoh River in the Olympics, about 8-10 miles in on the trail is amazing to see, surrounded by serious rainforest. Take the Hoh Lake Trail up from the river to get a good close look at it and how it's recovering.

Another example is right here in our back yard. The South Fork Cascade River



A good burn: *The South Fork Cascade River fire, 14 years later*

By Phil Fenner

was the scene of a good-sized burn back in 2003, and it's fairly easy to get to, since it's before the unbridged Middle Fork confluence, which appears to have stopped the fire's progress southward. The drama of the burn is well worth seeing, and I'd recommend it to anyone with an interest in long-term forest ecology.

I call it a "good burn" because it did just what fire will do when not suppressed in an area where the fuel load isn't excessive: it clears out the understory and smaller trees, while only burning off the dead lower branches and charring the lower bark of the big trees but leaving their crowns untouched. It actually did the forest a favor, making a more spacious setting in the long run. More distance between

trees means less likelihood of the next fire jumping up into the crowns and killing the remaining large trees.

Some descriptions of the trail say the Forest Service reopened the first mile of old road to fight the fire, the old road that's gated where it leaves the main Cascade River road and forms the first mile or so of the trail. The old roadbed has greened-up nicely, if indeed it was really used for vehicles just 14 years ago, and makes a pleasant stroll on the way in, with just a couple small gullies to negotiate. Then the old road ends and real trail begins, still some distance before the burn. In contrast to some trails that were built up to nearly single-track road conditions, this one's a good example of minimal but ad-

equate maintenance, with a few obstacles left to make it interesting.

When you come to the burn, the canopy opens and views of peaks appear. The trail follows what looks like the edge of the burn, which doesn't appear to have quite made it downhill to the riverbed below. Uphill are the bleached trunks of trees that died, and the blackened bark of the survivors with their crowns intact. New bright green undergrowth is coming up in open patches. A disaster site or a place of new birth and renewal? It takes the former to produce the latter. But the 'thinning' effect of the fire is clear, and I was left with a strong sense of confidence that the forest would be better off in the long run, more resilient and healthier.

Fire's been working in our forests for a very long time, since long before our myths, theology and commercial interests demonized it. Head up the South Fork Cascade River trail sometime. It makes a fine, easy early season outing when the high country is still under snow, and you'll see why I like to call it 'a good burn.'

SOME RESOURCES:

South Fork Cascade River valley and fire description: <http://conversecascades.blogspot.com/2013/11/know-your-forest-south-fork-cascade.html>

Era of Megafires traveling show: www.north40productions/wildfire/

Vestal Fire: An Environmental History, Told Through Fire, of Europe and Europe's Encounter with the World, by Stephen J. Pyne, 2000, UW Press

There is solace in a forest walk, near or far, though none so great as where declining civilization is of sufficient distance to temporarily forget. Some years ago, the corvid made the shaded journey from the Olympic Peninsula's Hoh River to the South Fork Calawah River, across the beguiling Bogachiel River and unparalleled richness of Indian Pass. Then back again. Although memory and logic knew otherwise, the sense that ample quantities of wild forest continued to drape an Earth still very much in her prime was recurring. Anyone with the zest to make repeated visits to the remnant, primary forests of the Olympics and North Cascades knows there are occasional points when the little guy in the cranial cockpit is content to take a siesta, leaving the ancient bodily knowledge of the human animal to finally do its thing. In those rare instances, impossible to consciously conjure, there's no reason for doubtfulness regarding the extent of the forest. It's as far as a now-clear eye can see, blanketing the slopes and accompanying the river for many miles. And you must now find a way through it.

The corvid spent much of his last column extolling the uprightness of a new, immodest Wilderness bill encompassing every last acre of the North Cascades that might meaningfully complete the package. This mindset applies in similar headstrong fashion to the native forests covering the rest of these federal public lands, which must be left to follow their natural trajectories with minimal, and preferably no, interference. Whether old growth or second growth, extraction here is rapidly becoming an anachronism. The U.S. Forest Service's "vegetation management" program is the stuff of musty museums, with foresters, their enabling NGOs, and bullying industrialists acting as stuffy curators of a paint-by-numbers exhibition. With the other Washington entering its core melt phase, the time to lay the groundwork for real and durable protection of these forests, meaning no damned chainsaws or dozers, is right this minute.

We've talked of carbon sinks, watersheds, and habitat as they relate to wild forested country. Those are the essential priorities, but there's no shame in also meditating on the experiential qualities. Here may be found a momentary release, if not an antidote, to a societal malaise which frankly is causing us all manner of increasing distress. To become cynical and barren in one's depths is as easy these

Corvid's eye



days as pumping yet another tank of gas. Yet in an unruly forest, our afflictions may be considered at proper scale. Beneath the canopy, there's suddenly no mistaking that there's more to be done, that we are but partway along. As a youth on the cusp of adulthood, the corvid knew of a gorge in the upper Tennessee River watershed, never logged, where native magnolia,

With the other Washington entering its core melt phase, the time to lay the groundwork for real and durable protection of these forests, meaning no damned chainsaws or dozers, is right this minute.

rhododendron, and mountain laurel grew beneath great eastern hemlocks and a living encyclopedia of hardwoods. The practice was to carve out a campsite a few miles up the basin, always close to the roaring branch as near everything else was steep-walled. From there the hours were left to wandering, shirtless in the south Appalachian steam bath, drinking straight from the cascade; and coming upon small, unexpected flats where the joyous stride could not help but be halted for a bit. Here was a feeling that one could lay himself upon the mosses, close his eyes, breathe his tranquil last and become forever part of it.

A dozen years later, after one of our more notorious winters (the sort that folks recall in their advanced years), the corvid had just descended from two days

of deep, late July snowpack on the north flank of Glacier Peak. Famished marmots were clustered on the few patches that had melted off, while there was no more than academic understanding that the Pacific Crest Trail was somewhere beneath the drifts. The exit ramp down Milk Creek, though, was a direct route back to the Cascades summer. Camp was again made, this time with ample bottomland, so it was resolved after eating to visit each of the understory species thereabouts. The evening dwindled away patiently, and each shrub or forb was greeted like an old friend. Corridors in the forest opened all around as the ambient light resisted its fade to nothing. And so it came about that the woods, its creatures, the waters, and their respiration were like gentle hands, upon which the corvid relaxed his feathers and opened his ears again to the reverberations of the old, old days, not yet completely squandered.

For the lost, for the hurt, for the common cynic, for the immeasurably joyful alike, a wild forest offers a portal to its central fountain for the pocket change of humility and curiosity. Life is ultimately the most splendid gift, and with an able assist from self-willed nature, the giver may

be glimpsed or even grasped. Its profundity is manifest from the fact that one may see, hear, touch, and taste it directly, though that is but the start. No reclusive, mysterious demiurge is needed to power it. It's as real as the sweat running down the small of one's back.

The improbable peaks of the North Cascades birth on their western slope the Chilliwack, Nooksack, Skagit, Sauk, Stillaguamish, and Skykomish rivers, while also hosting their many forks. All are witnessed and adorned in their upper basins by stands of superb Northwest forest, still exulting in the maritime air that liberally moistens boughs, roots, and mycorrhizae. Let it be, and the trees may retain or gain stupendous heights and girths, the midstory a series of spiral staircases partway up the limitless boles, and the understory an assemblage of cheery intimates; all of it as vigorous in rain as when the sun finally finds a way through. Let us be worthy of this verdant grandeur by allowing it generous space and time to express what it is and become what it will. How little we know of it yet; even as we learn, at long last, this much at least. Legislators, dealmakers, and managing agencies, too, will eventually come around, to the extent we all insist upon it.



Whitebark pine: Jewel of the alpine

by Art Kruckeberg (written in 1998)

Longtime N3C member and former board member Art Kruckeberg, University of Washington emeritus professor of botany, died May 25, 2016, at age 96. This piece from 1998 offers an indepth look at the significance of the Whitebark pine—and the challenges facing its habitat. Learn more at the Whitebark Pine Ecosystem Foundation webpage, <http://whitebarkfound.org/>

“Islands” of trees—“timbered atolls”—nestled in broad sweeps of richly colored mountain meadows: that grand landscape just below timberline inspires poets, lovers and just plain backpackers. Notable in the timbered atolls, one encounters whitebark pine (*Pinus albicaulis*), living and dead. Grand old once-living monarchs, now white ghosts: with branches and trunks

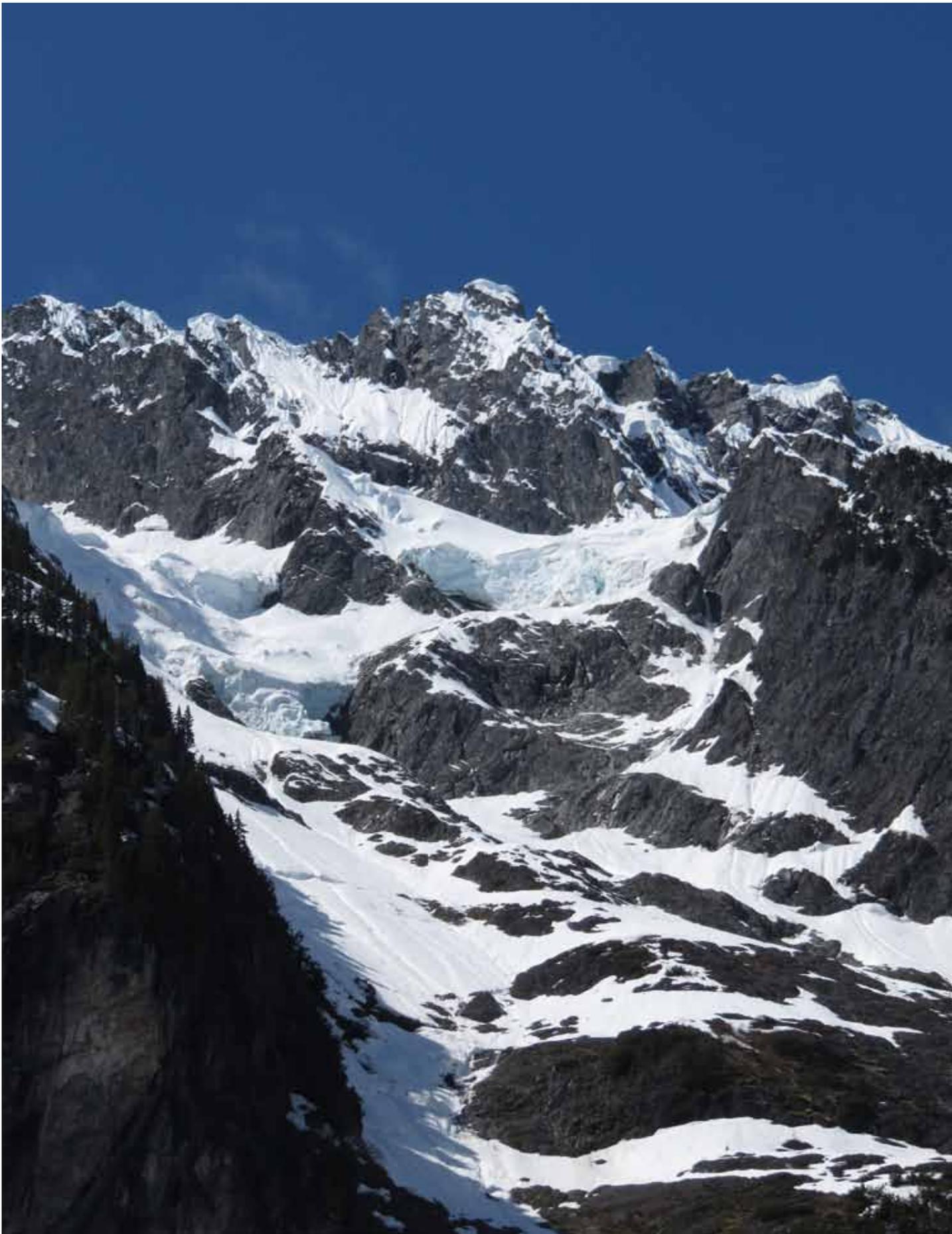
that have been blasted by decades of wind and snow. Photogenic are these stately skeletons. But how come? Do whitebark pines die of old age? Or, are they victims of a pestilence? Be patient; we’ll get to death in the high montane a bit later.

It can be argued that every life-zone in Washington State has a “keystone” species. From cold steppe with its sagebrush and bunchgrass dominants, up into the three or four forest zones, to the alpine, some one or more species is the linchpin that holds the ecosystem plants and animals together. Whitebark pine is an ideal example of a keystone species. But it is more than just dominant in sheer numbers of individual trees. The very fabric of the subalpine zone depends on the vitality of this pine. The most obvious dependent on the pine is that noisy bird, the Clark’s nutcracker.

The pine and this corvid (Crow Family) bird are truly ‘made for each other.’ Rather than shedding its seed from open cones, whitebark pine cones stay closed, waiting to be opened by the Clark’s nutcracker. With crop full of pine seeds, the bird then caches the seeds singly or in clusters just beneath the ground. Using their uncanny recall of the location of the caches, the bird revisits the buried food stores for sustenance in winter. But some seeds are missed and so new pine life begins as seedlings, often in groups—as cached—to become the next generation of pines. Indeed, made for each other: pine and

Whitebark pine above Fisher Creek basin. —JIM SCARBOROUGH PHOTO

CONTINUED ON PAGE 22



Earth Day 2017

Celebrating 60 years of the North Cascades Conservation Council in North Cascades National Park

By Tom Hammond

*Johannesburg Mountain
finger glaciers.*

— © TOM HAMMOND

In trying to find a way to celebrate and pay homage to the 60th anniversary of the North Cascades Conservation Council, I figured the best way to do that would be to enjoy some of the protected areas secured by the N3C. This trip report is special in that it marks a visit to what many consider the front country, easy to reach by car. Even front country, when protected, offers a true wilderness and wildlife experience. Just the stuff the N3C was founded to protect.

The snowpack at 3,500' measured about a meter, and thus provided for some enjoyable skiing and avalanche activity. The lower elevations are effectively snow-free, while the mid-levels (around 4-5k ft.) still have notable slabs. Mauri Peltó reports that SnoTel sites indicate a "normal" WE/snowpack. Still, the summits of the high North Cascades are completely coated with rime and ice and snow. Quite the spectacle and certainly one of the most uniformly white set of facades in recent memory.

I saw more deer (3 black tail) and bear (1 small black bear) than I saw people (0, and I was camped where hundreds of vehicles will pass in a single summer weekend). The biggest wildlife display occurred overhead—literally hundreds, if not thousands of Canada geese overflowed Cascade Pass on their annual migration north. Morning, noon and even at night, groups of about 200 would head to the west, V formations at about summit level, shifting and fluxing in a most impressive and poetic way, all the time calling to each other. I am amazed at their navigational ability, as well as their toughness.

Friday morning started a bit chilly—38°F. For a moment I even wondered if I should put on more than just the shorts and thin tee, but didn't and was glad for it. I packed in my skis farther than I skied in them to reach camp (about three miles to one) but then I was light as a bird once I set camp. Skiing was most enjoyable, and downright fast at/after sunset.

There were avalanches all day Friday, including some on my side of the valley that roared uncomfortably close to the road (my route out). Indeed, I crossed a significant pile of tailings as large as a city block and as high as a duplex at Midas

Creek (the source was closely above, not way up on the big peaks).

All avalanches were small, only a couple even coming close to the "respectable" category. Even still, the roar of tons of snow crashing about along with sun, warmth and waterfalls made for a fine day of skiing.

After a decent night sleep, the varied thrush gave the daylight call. Not too soon after "Mr Big" showed up! Yep, while not quite "The Big One" I had the privilege to see firsthand what not many can ever hope to experience.

At 06:12 I was sleeping comfortably, snug in my bag. There was a roar that was similar to dozens over the 24 hours I was present. I sat bolt up and looked out the tent door. I said aloud "Oh My God" as this massive cloud of powder blast propagated off Johannesburg with incredible speed and volume. In seconds, there was enough snow flowing off the main chute(s) to fill the lower bowl of the largest NFL/Futbol venue—heck, probably more. It is hard to describe the scale of structures that rise more than a vertical mile above the valley floor—and stretch for miles.

This is why I sleep with my camera. I was able to bring the full 1080HD recorder up and film before the main wave hit the lower valley. The event lasted about two minutes. The only reason I didn't get some of the fallout on my position, about three miles away, was the 30 mph winds were blowing west down the valley. (The front arriving was driving those winds. It was raining by the time I reached Whitehorse on the drive out—awesome!)

You can bet the next time the sun is out close to a weekend (or maybe not) I'll be back—there's megatons more from where that came...

I am so thankful for the knowledge, desire and ability to do this. Even more, I am thankful for the lands the North Cascades Conservation Council secured as protected. It just goes to show—the Wilderness begins where the road ends, and after 60 years, the need for habitat, clean water and breathable air are as great now, if not greater, than ever before.

Remembering *CHARLES EHLERT*

1937–2017

Charles Emile Ehlert, 79, formerly of Seattle, died peacefully on January 15, 2017 in Louisville, Colorado, where he had lived in the final year of his life. After struggling mightily for many years to maintain his independence, Charlie succumbed to the effects of Parkinson's disease. His remains were cremated and will be spread in his beloved Rocky Mountains.

Born in Alton, Illinois on August 6, 1937, he graduated from Alton Senior High School, and later received bachelor's and law degrees from Yale University and the University of Illinois.

Charles' 40-year career in Seattle was cause-driven and his causes were good ones. Through such varied work as a private practice lawyer, Assistant Director of Seattle's Legal Services Center, Planning Coordinator of the Seattle Model City Program, Assistant Director of the City of Seattle Department of Licensing and Consumer Affairs, board member of the ACLU, Director/Attorney with the ACLU Yakima Valley Migrant Project, and board member and director of the North Cascades Conservation Council, Charles was a vigorous representative and protector of the fundamental rights of free speech, equal protection, and consumer protection of individuals and a relentless advocate for environmental protection and wilderness preservation.

Charles was a prodigious reader (and book collector!) and a lover



of classical music, but he was first and foremost an outdoorsman. First introduced to hiking, backpacking and mountain climbing as a teenage camper and then counselor at Cheley Colorado Camps near Estes Park, Charles was happiest off the beaten track and in the mountains. He will always be remembered by friends and family as the person who introduced, and expertly guided us through, innumerable natural wonders in the Rocky Mountains, the North Cascades, the

Olympic Mountains, Hells Canyon; the Snake and upper Missouri Rivers, to name a few.

Charles endured the unrelenting and humbling effects of Parkinson's disease for more than 10 years. He met his challenges with courage and defiance. In the end, he did not survive; but he did not surrender.

Charles is survived by his children Charlie and Elizabeth and their spouses, four grandchildren, and two siblings and their families.

Tributes to Charles

Norm Winn

N3C member and Charlie's former law partner

Charlie Ehlert was raised in the rough railroad town of East St. Louis, IL. He attended Yale University on a scholarship for his undergraduate education and worked in the summer at an oil refinery in Louisiana to put himself through school. As a lawyer in Seattle, Charlie was a vigorous supporter of consumer rights and worked for the city of Seattle on consumer protection issues. In the mid-70s he joined the law firm of Smith, Brucker, Winn and Ehlert. He was a strong supporter of environmental causes. Ehlert is well-known for suing the DNR in the Classic U. lawsuit (Whidbey Island), which required the DNR to conduct more careful analyses of timber sales. He was an excellent rock climber. In his 20s he made difficult rock climbs in Colorado with Tom Hornbein, who is the first American to climb the West Ridge of Mt. Everest. He was a very good lawyer and a very good friend.

Tom Brucker

N3C board member and Charlie's former law partner

The following is from Charles Ehlert's article in the winter 2008-9 *Wild Cascades* chronicling his quest to locate the trunk of Methuselah, a 4,498-year-old bristlecone pine, in Nevada's Snake Range, famously labeled WPN-114:

Twenty years have passed since that memorable day—perhaps a quarter of our allotted span of years. A residue of questions remains with me, formed like bristlecones, slowly. What is the fascination with "life" about? Indeed, what is "life"? Is the universe set up so that "life" inevitably occurs? What drew me to the timberline on that windswept moraine that October day?

Charles's time of exploration, "life", ran out earlier this year, and he will be greatly missed. A long time NCCC member and vice president, he was my law partner, and a man of many talents. I first met Charles in the mid 1960s when he and I were part of a group of young lawyers, most of whom moved to Seattle from points east, who daily enjoyed our brown bag lunches in the downtown YMCA. Because of our interest in the outdoors, I soon gravitated to him.

Our first major trip was in 1970, when Charles led nine others on the Ptarmigan

Traverse, then a remote, difficult passage across the spine of the North Cascades (see TWC Spring 2004 for a history of the Traverse). Rain and fog on the last day prevented us from reaching Cub Lake, and we made a forced descent down Downey Creek, one of the nastiest descents I have ever experienced.

Then, for 25 consecutive years I traveled with Charles and others, including my wife Mary, as we tackled most of the glaciated peaks in the Cascades and Olympics, and traveled throughout miles of trails in both of those ranges. He spent countless hours researching each climb and trip to insure the safety and enjoyment of those on the venture, while we tackled some major peaks and traversed unmarked stretches of the Cascades and Olympics. He was a very caring person. My memories of being in the mountains with Charles are many and varied, and will always be with me. Charles was happiest when in the mountains, and we always knew that the slower he went, even lagging in the rear, the happier he was, as he never wanted to be away from the mountains.

His was a life well spent.

Tom Hammond

My fondest memories of Charles Ehlert come thanks to Betty Manning, Charles and the desire for connection. You see, Betty had a real affection and love for Charles. She wanted to have him about, so would regularly turn to me to snatch him up from his home and deliver him to her in Issaquah for lunch and some sharp words about conservation in the North Cascades. It was delightful to see them light up in each other's presence. As well, Charles and I would go to our favorite area Mexican restaurant—Rositas at Greenlake. I would be remiss to not mention Charles' brother Dirk—he has been there for Charles and such love is truly remarkable. Thanks for all you've done, Charles!

Karl Forsgaard

I first heard of Charlie Ehlert and Tom Brucker in the 1970s, when my college roommate worked as a summer intern at their law firm in Seattle. It was one of the very few Seattle law firms practicing environmental law back then, as I discovered when I went to law school at UW.

I started litigating for NCCC in 1992. In October 2000 I was a guest presenter at an NCCC board meeting in Charlie's cozy

house in the Green Lake neighborhood of Seattle. I was there to summarize three lawsuit wins involving off-road vehicles in National Forest roadless areas that are candidates for Wilderness designation, and showed Kodachrome slides of those places (North Fork Entiat, Dark Divide, Mad River). Charlie was intrigued by the legal issues and asked me to mail him copies of the published decisions. At that time the NCCC board of directors included many who are no longer with us – Dave Brower, Polly Dyer, John Edwards, Charlie Ehlert, Pat Goldsworthy, Kevin Herrick, Conway Leovy, Betty Manning, Harvey Manning, Laura Zalesky and Phil Zalesky. It was in Charlie's kitchen that Harvey asked me to join that board. For the next decade, Charlie's house remained in the rotation of venues for our board meetings.

Charlie and Tom climbed the Cascade and Olympic peaks years before I did. I went hiking with Charlie only once, in June 2003 at Sourdough Creek. Along with Charlie and other board members, my sons and I toured the North Cascades Institute campus that was then under construction at Diablo Lake, and then we hiked about a mile up the creek to a nice waterfall.

In addition to serving NCCC for decades as a board member and officer, Charlie also donated his professional legal expertise. The NCCC legal project on which I worked the most with Charlie was our application to change NCCC's federal tax status from a section 501(c)(4) to a 501(c)(3) entity. As a result of this change, contributions to NCCC became fully tax-deductible by donors. NCCC qualified for its current status because its purpose is primarily educational and scientific, and not political. Only if a substantial part of an organization's activities are devoted to influencing legislation will it lose its (c)(3) status. Meeting with non-legislative governmental employees is not considered attempting to influence legislation, and thus not political. Tom, Charlie and I worked with Doug Raff at the Riddell Williams law firm in Seattle for several months in 2006 to make sure the application conformed to statutory requirements. The components we drafted included a lengthy IRS form, plus a narrative of NCCC activities, revised articles of incorporation, revised bylaws, and new corporate policies. As his *pro bono* lawyering exemplified, Charlie was a generous man.

MIKE LOWRY

A remembrance

By Lynne Corne
Legislative aide to Congressman
Lowry, 1979-1985

Mike Lowry was elected to Congress in November 1978. When he began his term in January 1979, one of his first controversial issues to tackle was the right under 1855 treaties with Native peoples to “fish in their usual and accustomed places.” Yet salmon harvests were declining, and many people felt that a reduction in harvest was needed—and therefore the Native people should bear the brunt of the reduction even though they had been harvesting salmon runs for thousands of years without much impact. Faced with this injustice (and backed by the Supreme Court under the *Boldt* decision), Mike said “a great nation keeps its word!” And he hung on, scoring unprecedented victories in House committees, and even getting Republicans to vote with him to protect treaty rights and salmon runs. His most persuasive argument: it’s just the right thing to do. In the end, despite opposition from a unified political establishment, Mike prevailed, and the treaties were not abrogated. The treaty rights of Northwestern tribes continue to play a significant role in preserving native fish.

A few years later, another cause came up—the consideration of the Washington state wilderness bill. Wilderness, whether statutory or not, is one of the things that makes Washington such a desirable place to live. While no one would have accused Mike of being a backpacker or birdwatcher, still he understood its importance to the people of the state. Knowing that we needed to be well-armed with information, Mike directed me to spend days, even weeks, pouring over maps and gathering recreation data. (Part of that gathering included having me fly out to Washington about four times per year on his behalf for two years to go hiking, birdwatching, and backpacking all over the state. I was, umm, willing to make the sacrifice.)

And having “earned the right to speak for fish” Mike began a strategy of introducing a new wilderness bill—one to be seen through the eyes of the fish. The premise of the bill was “if I were a salmon, a steelhead, or a trout, what would I want



a wilderness bill to look like?” When he introduced this bill, if it didn’t exactly turn the debate into a fish-loving rout, it definitely put a new spin on the wilderness issue. It brought new areas into prominence, and fortified the argument in support of so many others. Most especially, the bill’s strong premise of supporting fisheries meant that timber advocates were not immediately going to strip away huge old growth in so many magnificent valleys. The bill flagged them as precisely the areas that native fish runs need most.

As the Washington delegation developed what became the Washington Wilderness Act of 1984, Mike took on the role as the most powerful advocate for passing the strongest possible bill. He was personally responsible for the addition of the Trapper Creek Wilderness in Skamania County.

When the final negotiations came in a meeting of the entire delegation, Mike was there, fighting to protect old growth, fish runs, Native sacred spaces, and so much that is important to future Washingtonians. During a break, I remember him saying “Is this good enough? I could still kill the bill if it isn’t.” But it was time. Mike had done all he could and then some. Washington had its wilderness bill. You might remember Mike the next time you go fishing or visit one of these areas. You might hear Mike in the silence. It’s probably his great laugh.

Washington Wilderness champion nonpareil

By Rick McGuire

With the passing of former Democratic Congressman and Governor Mike Lowry, Washington State has lost not only a great Wilderness champion, but one of its greatest, friendliest, and perhaps least recognized political heroes.

I first encountered Mike when he was serving on the King County Council, which may even have been known as the Board of Commissioners back then. Mike was one of the first people to see the dangers of unending urban sprawl and the paving over of King County. Mike held the line for years against such misguided projects as Lakemont Boulevard, which allowed the paving over of much of Cougar Mountain. Although he ultimately lost that battle, his efforts helped “pave the way” for growth management, and he played significant roles in helping to get farmland conservation started, and to defeat terrible projects like Interstate 605, the plan for an outer ring freeway extending right to the foot of the Cascades which if built would have sealed the fate of east King County.

Mike Lowry ran for Congress in the seventh district, basically south Seattle, in 1978. He developed a pro-Wilderness partnership with then-first district Congressman Joel Pritchard, a Republican who represented north Seattle and nearby areas.

The two were quite different personally. Pritchard came across as a straight-laced, pillar of the community type, though not without a sense of humor. Lowry was much more the hail-fellow-well-met type, and loved nothing better than sharing a glass or two with friends, old or new. He was nothing if not approachable, and did not look down in the slightest at a humble Congressional intern like me, working for second district congressman Al Swift. His chief aide Don Wolgamott and I spent several enjoyable summer weekends in 1980 exploring some of the more remote parts of western Virginia, including a wonderful weekend at the Buffalo Gap farm of Ernie Dickerman, one of the very first famous

CONTINUED ON PAGE 21

Celebrating 60 years

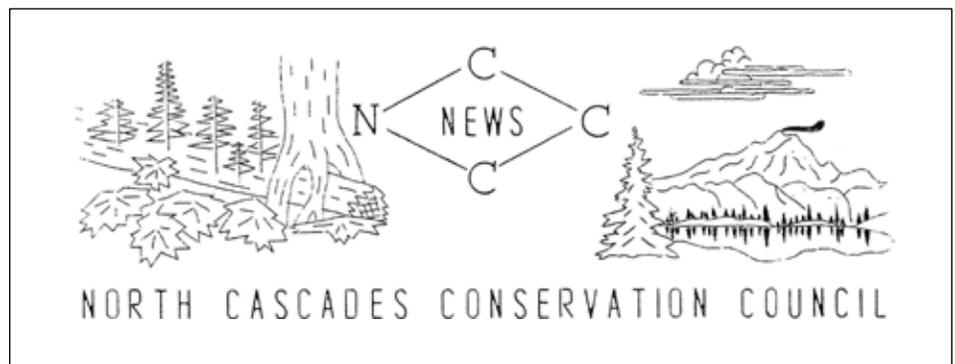
Since 1957, NCCC has worked to protect and preserve the North Cascades' lands, waters, plants, and wildlife through public participation and legal channels. For 60 years, we have actively supported expanding the North Cascades National Park, establishing new Wilderness Areas, protecting wildlife, promoting environmentally sound recreational use in wild areas, and protecting old-growth trees. For 60 years we have taken action to stop damaging timber sales, while supporting responsible forest management and protecting forestlands from conversion to non-forest uses. For 60 years we have been an independent, all-volunteer organization whose work is carried out by our board and members. And for 60 years we have accepted donations but no sponsorships, in order to maintain our independence.

Our mission statement today is the same as when we were founded:

MISSION STATEMENT

"To secure the support of the people and the government in the protection and preservation of the scenic, scientific, wildlife, wilderness, and outdoor recreational resource values in the North Cascades; and to work for the establishment of Wilderness Areas that they may be passed on unimpaired for the education and enjoyment of future generations."

"The NCCC was formed with the idea of spearheading and unifying conservationists' efforts throughout the country to save for posterity this unusual remaining sample of unspoiled wilderness as it is."



Chelan meeting shows happy motoring dreams linger for Stehekin

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

the Pratt River valley to the Alpine Lakes Wilderness to go through, Representative Doc Hastings got to tack on a provision to the Defense Appropriations Act stating that the Secretary of Interior "may" change the boundaries of the Mather Wilderness to allow construction of a new road into the upper Stehekin valley.

No funds were appropriated for such a road—nothing. Crucially, the legislation says the Secretary of Interior (really a euphemism for the NPS) may move the Wilderness boundary, not shall move it, or construct the road. Nothing was, or is, mandated in any way.

It was apparent in 2014, and even more apparent today, that rebuilding would be insanely expensive and unnecessary to support recreational use of the area. Any car that might drive it would need to be barged up Lake Chelan at high cost. As NPS's statistics show, more people use the route of the old road now on foot or horseback than did before when vehicles could drive it.

N3C board member Phil Fenner attended the recent Chelan meeting, listened to the calls for a road up the Stehekin into the Wilderness core of the Cascades and claims that the Park Service was "locking

them out," and expressed our support for the hikers who use the route now and for the Park Service for making the decision to let the upper road revert to trail. To their everlasting credit, NPS personnel patiently explained that they had no money to build such a road, and saw no possibility of ever getting money for such a road. They also explained that they could never maintain such a road, that they saw no need for such a road because visitation to the upper Stehekin valley has actually increased in the years since the old road disappeared. Let's keep it that way.



Of grizzly bears and big spaces

By Rick McGuire

Last-minute change to grizzly EIS comment

While we fully support grizzly reintroduction, we have officially switched our position from Alternative D to Alternative C based on the projected number of helicopter incursions into Wilderness (150 vs 672 estimated). After some debate the decision was made by the board to reduce the number of helicopter flights into Wilderness required for this project.

Considering that we have objected vociferously to helicopter use by other federal agencies, and have a major letter in the works about helicopter use in the North Cascades, we submitted modified comments just days before the extended comment period ended April 30.

Whether Alternative C or D is adopted, this is sure to be a changing and dynamic plan during the course of the project life, and we affirm all efforts to reintroduce grizzlies to the Cascades.

What do you think? Let us know at twc@northcascades.org!

The comment period has closed on the Environmental Impact Statement on Grizzly Bear Recovery in the North Cascades, released by the National Park Service and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Now comes the worrisome period of waiting, not only over which alternative they might choose, but also whether the entire reintroduction effort might be scuppered for political reasons.

The Trump administration has nominated David Bernhardt as Assistant Secretary of Interior responsible for such matters. Bernhardt, no friend of wild creatures during his time with the Bush II administration, has been called a “walking conflict of interest,” especially to endangered species. The entire grizzly reintroduction effort could be in grave danger.

Just about everyone who loves the Cascades would like to see the return of this iconic animal that lived up and down the entire range until it was extirpated long before most people now alive were born. There are still reports now and then, some of them credible, of a few grizzlies roaming the Cascades. These have sometimes been referred to as “ghost bears.”

But even ghosts, at least ursine ones, have to mate and breed or they will die off. There seem to be rather too few ghosts here to manage to sustain themselves. The reality is probably more along the lines of the Cascades being a population sink for bears wandering down from the north now and then. There are too few of them to be able to find each other and breed. They live out their lives, finding food and habitat, but no mates.

A huge extent of wild country in the North Cascades, over two million acres,

could support a substantial population of grizzly bears. With no bears there now, there is a danger that putting in just a few bears could mean that they would disperse far and wide, maybe too far and wide to find each other. Political considerations might make wildlife managers reluctant to introduce many bears. That would be fine, if there was some way to control where they went after release. But there isn't. If just a few bears are put in, and a significant number of those spread into the huge, bearless wild country to the south, we could end up with a situation not much different from what exists now.

Grizzly bears are not elusive creatures.

They are active in daylight. Perhaps in places like Alaska's Brooks Range, where food is scarce, and grizzlies thin on the ground, they will travel enormous distances. But in the places in British Columbia where grizzlies live, that are

closest to and most similar to the Cascades, like the South Chilcotin, and Wells Gray Park areas, they do not normally travel huge distances and are not hard to find. If grizzly bears are around, you generally know it, either by seeing (or sometimes smelling) bears themselves or evidence of their passage.

Even though few salmon reach the Cascades, other food sources should be relatively plentiful. No one knows what any particular bear will do after the stressful experience of being taken from its home and released in the Cascades. Some may stay close to their area of release. Some have an amazing homing instinct and could head back to where they came from. Some will strike off into those vast bear-free reaches to the south, where their chances of ever meeting a mate will diminish with every mile they go farther south.

A new administration means the entire grizzly reintroduction effort could be in grave danger.

New clearcutting

By Bruce Barnbaum

Wayne McCrory is a professional bear biologist in British Columbia who has spent most of his adult life studying and protecting bears and their habitats in B.C., Alberta and other areas. Some years back he was in charge of designing a program for grizzly recovery in the Canadian portion of the Cascades. While doing this, he was always mindful that bears do not recognize political boundaries, and that a vast extent of wild country stretched away south from the relatively small area that was his official responsibility. He is also well aware that some people think that the U.S. Cascades may at present be a population sink for northern bears wandering south, finding habitat but no mates.

When asked recently about concerns over bears released into the Cascades spreading far and wide into the bearless hinterland stretching south, and whether it would be better to release only a few bears, or as many bears as possible, his answer was unequivocal: “the more bears that can be released, the more viable any reintroduction program will be.”

McCrory is also no stranger to politics trumping science. The program to reintroduce grizzly bears into the Cascades north of the border that he put considerable time and effort into wasn't merely scaled back by nervous politicians. The B.C. government pulled the plug on it entirely, for reasons never made clear. Apparently there were people in positions of power who just didn't like the idea, whatever their rationale.

Hopefully if the effort is made to reintroduce grizzly bears to the Cascades, it will be done in a way with the best chances of success. In such a big area, more bears equals more chance of success. Fewer bears equals fewer chances of success.

No doubt the people in charge of the reintroduction program are nervous about possible political opposition. It is possible that could lead to only a few bears being released here. If grizzly reintroduction can't be done in a way that maximizes the chances of success, it could be a very long time before another opportunity comes to try again.

Long ago, men used axes to gradually chip away a wedge of a standing tree, deepening the wedge with every blow until the tree could no longer hold its weight, and fell over. With huge trees it often took many men several days to bring a single tree down.

Then came the hand saw, and two men on opposite sides of the tree were enough to cut that same type of wedge that the axmen cut, deepening the cut until the tree fell. Two men could do the job in a day or two.

Then came the chainsaw, and a single man could cut into the tree to create a wedge, then he would often come in from the other side of the tree, sawing toward the wedge until the tree fell over. A crew of six or so loggers was able to take down acres of trees within a few weeks, sometimes, even faster.

Now, in the latest iteration of machinery supplanting man, a single man can take down many trees, one after another. A driver of a vehicle that looks and operates like a track-hoe, but is fitted with four grabbing arms—two on each side—and a fast, powerful circular saw below the arms that can grab a tree (all directed from within the cab), cut through the tree in just a second below the four gripping arms, and then toss the tree off to the side and immediately move on to the next one. A single driver can now take down acres of trees within a day. This has been standard logging operations in some areas for decades; I've seen it now for the first time in the North Cascade Mountains near my home. Large, old-growth trees are likely too big to handle for this vehicle, but the standard 30-50 year cycle for trees filling today's outdoor lumber factories (widely known as “tree farms”) perfectly fit the capabilities of this vehicle.

The site of the operation is four miles east of Granite Falls on the Mountain Loop Highway. If that location rings a memory bell for you, it's because it should: it was to be the location of the 80-acre motocross project that was finally killed at the supe-

rior court level in Kings County. Ironically those trees being cut were supposed to be part of the noise attenuation for the project, one of the many lies made by the proponents to make the project more acceptable. It seems apparent that the company owning the land had tree removal in mind whether or not the motocross project had been approved. Fortunately the motocross project was killed; unfortunately a number of trees on the south side of the project have now been killed, as well. (It's likely this will soon be followed by tree removal

over all, or much, of that entire 400-acre plot of private land.)

I'm not a fan of tree removal, and I find clearcutting to be nothing less than diabolical. A forest is a wondrous thing, providing oxygen, land stabilization, wildlife habitat, carbon sequestration, water

and air purification and immense beauty among its many attributes. Unfortunately none of these attributes provides monetary benefits. But trees also provide so many things that humans desire, from paper products to home framing, to furniture and even sculptures, all of which provide monetary benefits, but only after the tree is killed. A clearcut immediately destroys all of the invaluable natural assets—none of which are assigned any monetary value—for the things that humanity values in monetary terms, which is increasingly the total measure of human value. And now, several acres can be removed by a single driver in a single day. Profits soar.

So, among the horrible things that we're doing to our planet when we clearcut a forest, please also consider that when you hear about job loss due to immigrants stealing our jobs, it turns out that it's generally machinery, mechanization, robotics and other such things that take jobs away much quicker and much more permanently than immigrants. For a day or so, this was starkly visible on the Mountain Loop Highway, as one tree after another was cut and literally tossed aside by a single driver doing his day's work.

*A clearcut destroys
invaluable natural
assets for things that
humanity values in
monetary terms*



A hidden history

What might have been: the Ice Peaks National Park proposal

By Phil Fenner and Rick McGuire

Eighty years ago this year, and 20 years before N3C was founded, a National Park Service team made a study of the Cascades. It's a remarkably interesting document with a stunning photo supplement. They called the proposal the "Ice Peaks National Park," and its goal was to protect the high mountain scenery of Washington's Cascades from the Canadian border all the way down to Mount Adams (see proposal map).

From today's perspective eight decades later, it just sounds too good to be true. And so it was, for several reasons. Park proposals had been made previously in the Cascades, but never went anywhere. In the 1920's the National Park Service thought that Mount Rainier was more than enough for Washington State. But the idea would just never go away.

Politics in the United States changed radically with the Great Depression and the election of Franklin Roosevelt to the White House. It almost brings tears to one's eyes to think that this country once produced men of such caliber, especially Roosevelt, who became president at a time of such crisis that revolution was a real possibility. His bold actions to help people were a complete contrast to the do-nothing Hoover administration. The aura of confidence he projected with such seeming ease was just what the country needed during some of its darkest hours.

Roosevelt brought back hope. He was resoundingly reelected with a landslide vote in 1936, and was quite possibly at that moment the most popular president ever. But even a master politician like Roosevelt could overreach. 1937 was not a good year for him. Economic stimulus programs were scaled back prematurely and the country began to slide back into depression. The centerpiece of the New Deal, the

National Recovery Administration, was struck down by the "nine old men" on the Supreme Court, as Roosevelt called them. Still riding high, Roosevelt responded with a plan to expand the Supreme Court by adding new Justices. It was too big a move even for Franklin Roosevelt, and its failure pulled Roosevelt down from the pinnacle he had so recently occupied. The proposal also made it more difficult to get the rest of his agenda accomplished, though eventually he bounced back and won an unprecedented third and even fourth term.

In this context the Ice Peaks Park study was conducted by the National Park Service, under the orders of the Interior Department under Secretary Harold Ickes, quite possibly the best person ever to hold that office. Just a quick look at the accompanying map shows how ambitious it was: close to 200 miles north to south.

The formal proposal was not released until 1940, when politics had shifted even further. Roosevelt and Ickes were fighting to defend the brand new and very large Olympic National Park, which was under heavy attack from the timber industry and Washington state politicians. Roosevelt administration and citizen activists from New York were responsible for its creation, and Olympic did not have many local defenders.

Unlike Ice Peaks, Olympic Park was established primarily to protect not mountain scenery, but the largest remaining extent of old-growth forest remaining in the country. Incredibly ambitious for an era when most people believed trees were for cutting, it was a miracle that Olympic was ever designated, and that it survived repeated attacks that persisted for decades. But the timber industry was in no mood to concede more protections of forest in the Cascades.

War was raging in Europe by 1940, and although Roosevelt campaigned to keep America well out of it, he knew that the country would inevitably be drawn in. It was not the right moment to try to establish another big new National Park in Washington State, while the fate of Olympic still looked so precarious, industry was dead set against it, and war clouds darkened the horizon.

During WWII the demand for timber was so great that loggers were exempted

The little-known Ice Peaks proposal stands as the most interesting "what if?" in the conservation history of the Cascades

from the draft. All consideration of protecting more timberland was shelved. One government poster went so far as to say "Log like hell! The woods are also a front line!"

Ice Peaks lacked local supporters except for what Harvey Manning called "the noble little Everett branch of The Mountaineers." Without that support, and with the War and then the post-war building boom and advent of the gas-powered chain saw, the recommendation for Ice Peaks would pass before the North Cascades Conservation Council would form and revive the idea of a National Park in the Cascades. Luckily, some of the ancient forest remained to be protected in the most remote areas, mostly north of Snoqualmie Pass.

Perhaps the failure of the Ice Peaks proposal was not such a tragedy. Yes, it covered a lot of ground, but a close look at the map of the proposal shows that the boundaries were drawn to protect scenery in the form of high snowy mountains, and not a whole lot else. Some old-growth forest was included, but most major valleys were excluded. In a lot of places it had very narrow corridors connecting volcanoes.

We sometimes forget, too, that had Ice Peaks happened, the National Park Service of Stephen Mather and his successors would have managed much of the Cascade Crest, and their proclivity for roads would probably have led to building a “parkway” or a network of them, along its spine, on the model of the Mather Parkway once proposed to encircle Mt. Rainier (and luckily only made it a quarter of the way around). The Park Service proposed lots

of highways, lodges and even tramways for North Cascades National Park as recently as the 60s. So, although at first glance Ice Peaks may seem like a lost opportunity, it may have been a near miss. The intact wilderness core of the North Cascades we treasure today would almost certainly have been lost to the “infernal combustion engine” had Ice Peaks gone forward.

And perhaps worse, might Ice Peaks have created the impression that the job of conservation in the Cascades was done? Would logging have progressed right up to the proposed Park boundaries? We’ll never know, but we do know that the reinvigorated northwest conservation movement, beginning with N3C’s great victory in 1968, went on to protect most of the area that was included in the Ice Peaks proposal, and perhaps more important, much that was never included. And protect it more completely, as Wilderness as well as Park. Wilderness designation, after all, is what keeps it wild.

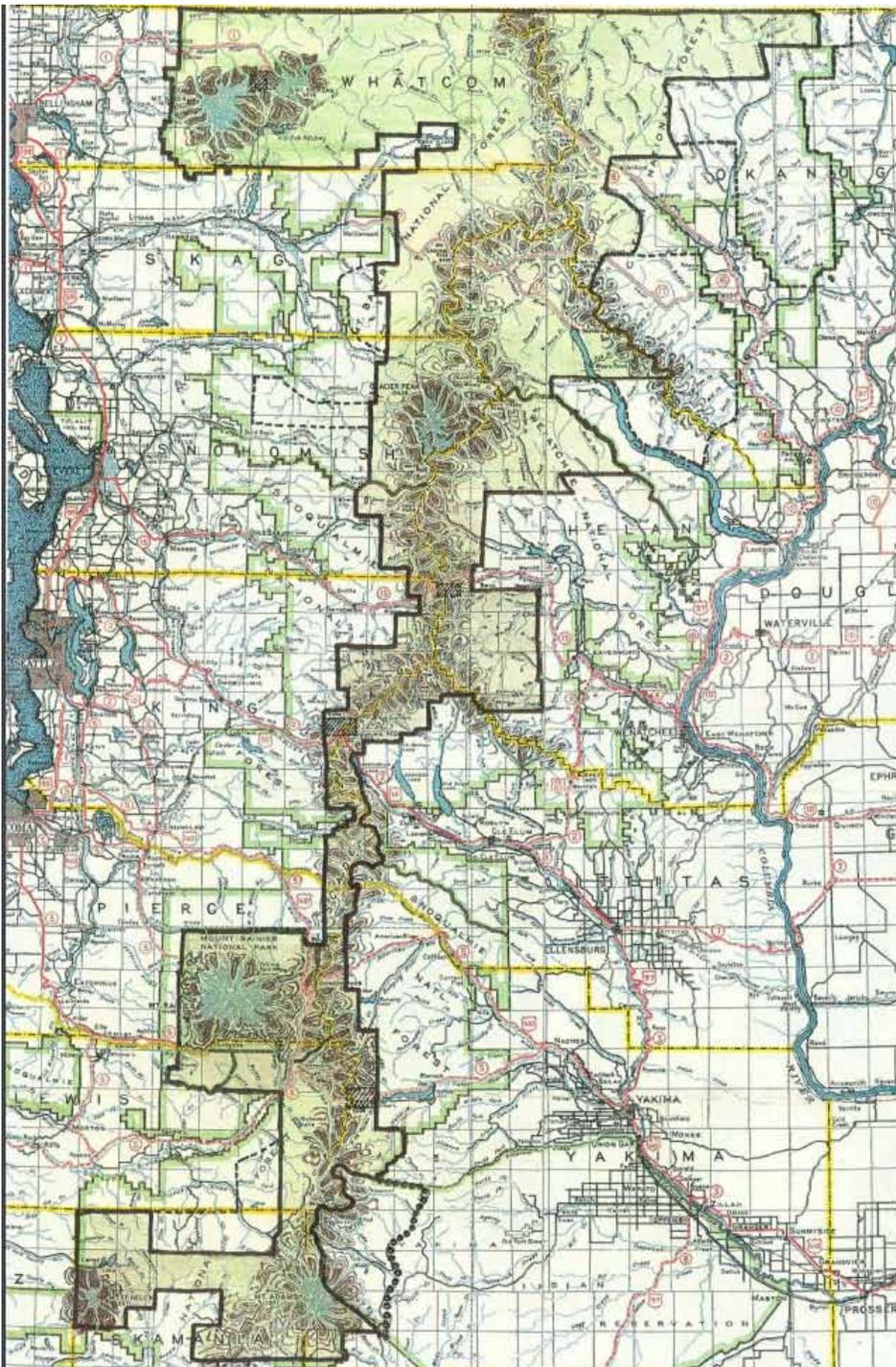
Conservation itself evolved into much more than an effort to protect scenery. It became more about protecting natural ecosystems, forests, waters, and wildlife, rather than only picture postcard, big “ice peaks.” The Olympic National Park was far ahead of its time in this, but the concept did finally take hold. Wilderness efforts in the Cascades have shifted over the years away from emphasizing high country to emphasizing biologically productive lower-elevation lands wherever possible.

The little-known Ice Peaks proposal still stands as the most interesting “what if?” in the conservation history of the Cascades. We hope readers will take the time to study and ponder the map presented here. The history of the proposal, and much else, is related in detail in Harvey Manning’s great history book, *Wilderness Alps*, a work that needs to be read by anyone with an interest in protection of the Cascades.

Are you a member of N3C in good standing? If so, and if you want a copy of *Wilderness Alps*, we’ll send you one! Just email philf@northcascades.org and include your mailing address.

—L.D. Lindsley photo, from the 1937 *Photographic Supplement to the Ice Peaks Park Proposal*.

National Park Service map, from Ice Peaks Proposal, 1940.



The plight of the Cascade red fox

By Ivy Terry, Emily Newell, Suzannah Yu, Tyler Haas, Kyle Barry, and Patrick Kuo

Written as part of the Conservation and Governance of Rare Species course at the University of Washington under Dr. Marc Miller and Dr. John Marzluff, a well-regarded corvid researcher, and presented to the N3C April board meeting.

The Cascade red fox (*vulpes vulpes cascadensis*), a rare sight for park goers, is a Cascade treasure that faces extreme risk of extinction. A relative of the red fox (*vulpes vulpes*), this Washington subspecies became isolated after its migration route was disrupted by glaciation. This caused populations to become fragmented in high altitude “islands.” Isolation of these populations led to a new genetically and morphologically distinct fox, and thus the new subspecies, *cascadensis*, came to be.

Founded by a small population, the Cascade red fox over time has been increasingly hindered by low genetic variability. The human settlement of the West during the 1800s, caused an influx of development and hunting, putting further pressure onto the fragile subspecies. This pushed individuals further up the peaks, isolating populations and increasing competition for resources and space with other wild dogs, such as coyotes.

Although the exact population size of the Cascade red fox is unknown due to a general lack of research, the limited number of detections indicates that the small population is fragmented and declining. Remaining populations are located in and around Mount Rainier National Park, Gifford Pinchot National Forest, and a handful of places in the North Cascade Ecosystem. But, as noted by Keith Aubry, a wildlife biologist with the U.S. Forest Service, with declining and severe isolation of populations, the Cascade red fox is at great risk of extinction.

In 2014, the Cascade red fox was listed as a candidate species in Washington State. However there is no federal listing or recovery plan in place. As its situation becomes more dire with continued fragmen-



—DAVE COWELL PHOTO

tation, human development, and climate change, more protective action must be taken to save this unique subspecies.

In August 2016, California’s Channel Islands delisted three native subspecies of island fox from the United States Endangered Species Act (ESA). This success represented the fastest recovery for any ESA-listed mammal in the United States. This recovery was accomplished through predator control, habitat protection and captive breeding. This incredible success story emphasizes the power of collaborative conservation to rescue a species on the brink of extinction. Such conservation efforts should extend to the diminishing populations of the Cascade red fox.

Lowland foxes, as their name indicates, do not frequent the high mountain habitats and subalpine meadows of the Cascades in which the Cascade red fox is found. With separate ranges these two species will not interbreed. This means that the Cascade red fox will remain a genetically distinct population from other red fox species.

This genetically distinct subspecies justifies future conservation efforts. Genetically pure populations can be beneficial to the protection of the evolutionary pro-

cess and the environmental systems that generate future evolutionary diversity. If the Cascade red fox goes extinct all of its unique alleles will be lost and the fox gene pool will suffer a detrimental decrease in diversity.

There is some hope for this fox as its range includes Mount Rainier National Park. This means, under park management, they do receive some protection from illegal feeding, trapping and hunting. However, in order to ensure survival the Cascade red fox must be accorded full protection under the United States Endangered Species Act. With full protection this

Washington endemic would receive the recognition and protections necessary to grow and recover.

With the Cascade red fox being endemic to Washington and the Cascade region, the loss of this subspecies is our loss alone. It is our duty to conserve and protect those that are our wildlife neighbors and this extends to the Cascade red fox.

“The volcanoes of the Cascade Range appear to act as islands of habitat in the sky for small and fragmented Cascade red fox populations. The low-elevation forests may as well be the ocean and it is unknown whether the foxes move between these sky islands.”

—JOCELYN AKINS 2014

More on the red fox:

http://wdfw.wa.gov/conservation/endangered/species/cascade_red_fox.pdf

https://www.nps.gov/mora/learn/nature/upload/CascadeFox_Akins2012-CCP-ScienceBrief.pdf



Huntoon Point. —© ATHENA PANGAN PHOTO

Lowry remembrance

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 14

Wilderness advocates, and veteran of the campaign to establish the Great Smoky Mountains National Park.

During the 1960s and 1970s, a strong tradition in Congress held that no Wilderness area would be established without the support of the Member in whose district the potential Wilderness area was located. This gave Congressmen from rural areas, usually quite conservative, virtual veto power over the establishment of new Wilderness areas, and they didn't hesitate to use it.

The partnership of Mike Lowry and Joel Pritchard broke that tradition, at least in Washington State, in the run-up

to the 1984 Washington Wilderness Act. Lowry and Pritchard argued that these were National Forest lands, owned by all Americans, not just those who happened to live nearby. They also argued that their urban constituents were big users of these lands, and deserved a voice in their fate. It worked. Without Lowry and Pritchard, the million-acre 1984 bill would likely have not included nearly as much land.

Mike himself went on to run unsuccessfully for the Senate, but became Washington governor from 1992 to 1996. As with many Wilderness and environmental advocates of the time, Mike was not much of a hiker himself, although he enjoyed the oc-

casional stroll under old-growth trees. He could have been called a "great indoorsman". Even though his tastes in Nature may have been to share a beer with friends in some comfortable, shady spot, he did more for conservation in Washington State than almost any of his contemporaries.

He will be missed, and remembered, as we used to say, as someone who was "against all things bad, and for all things good."

Whitebark pine

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

corvid bird have evolved a tight mutualism. Made for Each Other, so expressive of this mutualism, is the title of a fascinating book by Ron Lanner (Oxford University Press). Lanner stresses that the pine-corvid linkage is a success story elsewhere in the North Temperate areas of the world: Japan, Siberia, the Swiss Alps—all have their own species of five-needle, closed-cone pines and crow family nut eaters.

There are other vital strands in the web of whitebark pine-corvid symbiosis. Other animals depend on the pine's seed crop. The Northern red squirrel harvests whole cones and caches them here and there in the subalpine. Not all caches become survival kits for the squirrels. The ravenous raiders of cone caches made by both nutcrackers and squirrels are bears, which find good, fattening food for insulation during the winter's sleep in the pine nuts. In the northern Rockies grizzly bears depend on stealing cone caches to put on fat for winter. Black bears in the High Cascades also raid the caches, and are known to climb the pines for the closed cones in the tree's crown.

All this display of interdependence of animals on each other and on the pine trees neatly epitomizes the keystone species concept. Relatively new, the idea of the 'keystone species' can have clearcut case histories like the present one. Others can be recited. But what about some dominant or even infrequent species whose ecological life-histories may not be known? Assuredly, other examples will come to light. But then there is a flip side to the keystone idea. Are there species which an ecosystem can do without? For instance can a rare organism, even one endangered or threatened with extinction, be lost without any major cascading effects on other plants or animals? Some ecologists have contemplated this possibility by even espousing a kind of 'species triage.' Like the medic in the war zone who abandons hopelessly wounded cases, a land manager may decide that the loss of some rare organism will not rock the ecosystem's ark. Should species triage be countenanced? Who knows?

One way to test the 'keystone-ness' of a species is for nature or humans to eliminate it. That may just be what is happening to some populations of whitebark pine! In this case, not intentional elimination. An alien fungus disease, white pine blister rust, and the mountain pine beetle have

a death grip on whitebark pine populations in the northern Rockies. And its loss through infection will ricochet through the ecosystem: corvids, squirrels, and bears will suffer, not to mention the loss of the pine itself. The sad story for the Rockies is told in a U. S. Forest Service General Technical Report 'Symposium on Whitebark Pine Ecosystems: Ecology and Management of a High-Mountain Resource.' The pine's plight is dramatically told in the magazine Natural History, November 1998: "Trouble at Timberline."

Our parochial concern must ask: How is the pine faring in the high country of the North Cascades? Consultation with Forest Service biologists was highly rewarding. Jim Hadfield, forest pathologist, and Paul Flanagan, forest entomologist, both with the Wenatchee National Forest, have undertaken studies of the pine's status in Washington ("The Whitebark Pine Stand Conditions Studies"). They have selected 16 study sites in the Wenatchee and Colville National Forests, including Tiffany Lake and Starvation Mountain, not far from the Methow Valley.

All sixteen sites show evidence of blister rust infection. Their survey gave a total of 222 dead trees, 43 by fire, 75 by the disease; some mortality may be due to both fire and disease. How does this level of mortality compare with that in the Rockies? My Forest Service informants believe that Cascades whitebark pine is not in as great jeopardy from disease as in the Rockies populations. However another perturbation to the pine's existence is significant. The pine is a seral species, that is, it is a stage in succession of forest types. In earlier times before fire protection, spontaneous fire kept the pine stage in place by removing the competing conifers. Other species, mostly subalpine fir, Englemann spruce and lodgepole pine are now out-competing whitebark pine in our high Cascades.

This complex functional linkage of the pine and its dependent animals with fire, competition and disease, not to mention other habitat influences, calls to mind the seminal words of John Muir: 'When we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the universe.'

So what is the 'bottom line' for whitebark pine in this complex web of life and death? Right now, the pine is not severely endangered in the North Cascades. However the situation could worsen unless

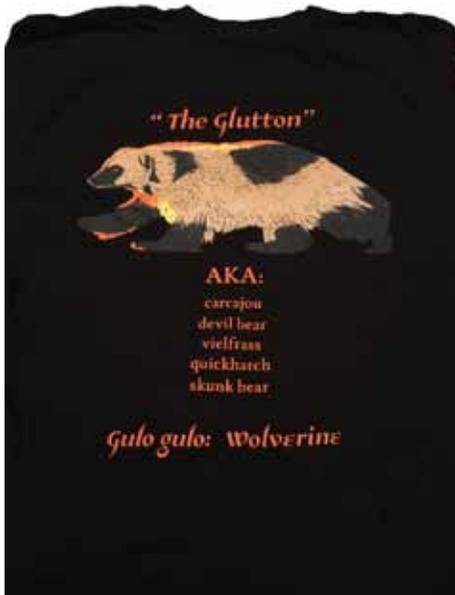
sound forest management plans are put into effect. Forest pathologist Jim Hadfield thinks that some inherent blister rust resistance may already have appeared in the pine's populations. This resistance in individual trees may be due to genetic preadaptation; fortuitous resistance in pre-disease times. After all, the disease came into the West around 1910, barely time for resistance to develop. Further, our Cascade timberline habitats are more demanding than those of the northern Rockies, so that the disease is less likely to devastate stands. Then too, some deliberate removal of the competing tree species may be called for.

Hardin's Law speaks to the complexity of the whitebark pine 'syndrome': 'We can never merely do one thing.' We and later generations of naturalists will watch closely the outcome of this drama, not only for preserving the aesthetic of the grand subalpine landscape, but as well, to keep the "Made for Each Other" mutualism viable.

"The [North Cascades Park supporters] were professionals, students, mountain climbers, campers, bikers and a host of others determined to save their North Cascades. Our army was better generated [than the Forest Service's] by the creative leadership of the North Cascades Conservation Council. You could count on them at every bearing to discomfit the special interests with the well-researched, articulate documentation about the resources of the region and their values both economic and environmental."

—George B. Harzog, Jr.
former Director of the National Park Service in his memoir *Battling for the National Parks*, 1988

Yes, Hugh Jackman, there really are wolverines



Said Ernest Thompson Seton in 1927, “the Wolverine is a tremendous character...a personality of unmeasured force, courage and achievement so enveloped in a mist of legend, superstition, idolatry, fear and hatred, that one scarcely knows how to begin or what to accept as fact.” No wonder Jackman, who plays Wolverine in the X-Men movies, admitted in May that he had no idea that wolverines really existed until the director clued him in on the first day of shooting. Get this cool teeshirt from the NOCA Park office and you can help Jackman and others know their fauna.

“Let’s try a little CPR for the earth — Conservation, Protection, Restoration.”

—David Brower



Enjoy The Wild Cascades? Not a member yet? **Join NORTH CASCADES CONSERVATION COUNCIL!**

Yes! I want to support North Cascades Conservation Council’s efforts working on many fronts to establish new wilderness, defend our forests, support wildlife conservation and keystone species, and promote sound conservation recreational use. Be part of a vibrant grassroots network of advocates for protection of unique lands, clean waters, native plant life, and wilderness of the North Cascades. You’ll receive your copy of *TWC* three times a year.

Donate online at www.northcascades.org – just click “Donate Now” and use your credit card.
Or fill in this form and mail it to us at the address below.
Provide us with your email address and you’ll receive our e-newsletter, the *Cascades Catalyst*.

Support the N3C with a generous IRS tax-deductible contribution in the amount of:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$10 Living lightly/student | <input type="checkbox"/> \$200 Defender |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$30 Individual | <input type="checkbox"/> \$300 Advocate |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$50 Family | <input type="checkbox"/> \$500 Benefactor |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$100 Supporter* | <input type="checkbox"/> \$1000 Patron |
- \$ _____ Other

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State ____ Zip _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Please bill my Mastercard VISA for my contribution to N3C

Name as it appears on card: _____

Account # _____ Exp. Date _____

Signature _____

* Donors at the \$100 level and above will receive a free copy of *Wilderness Alps* by Harvey Manning.

ALL donations include N3C membership and a subscription to our journal, *The Wild Cascades*. N3C is a 501(c)(3) organization. All donations are tax deductible.

If paying by mail, send this form with check or money order to:
NORTH CASCADES CONSERVATION COUNCIL
PO Box 95980, Seattle, WA 98145-2980

THE WILD CASCADES

Journal of the North Cascades Conservation Council
Post Office Box 95980
University Station
Seattle, Washington 98145-2980

Non-Profit Organization
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
SEATTLE, WA
PERMIT No. 8602



Gothic Basin. —© ATHENA PANGAN PHOTO