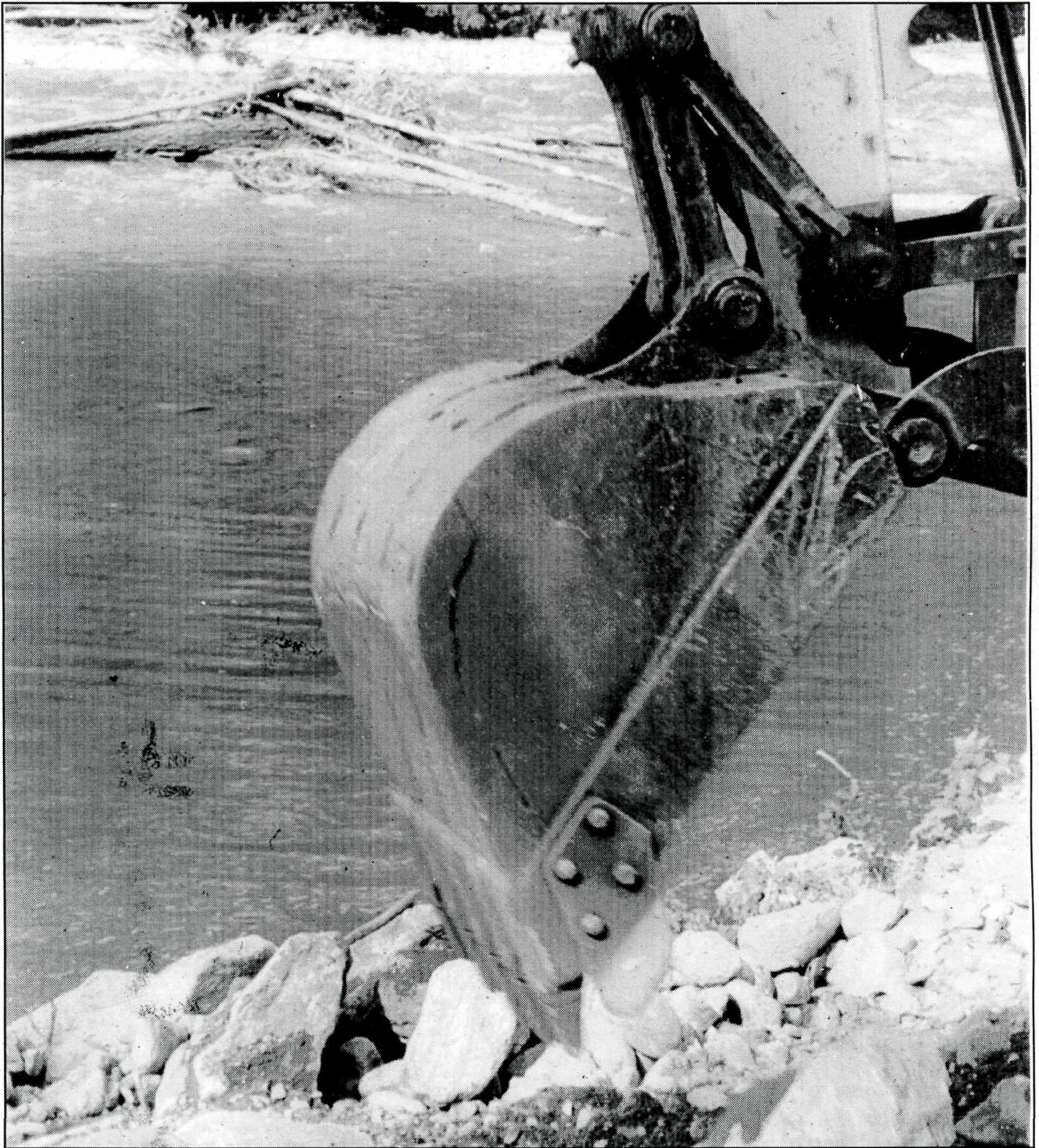

THE WILD CASCADES

THE JOURNAL OF THE NORTH CASCADES CONSERVATION COUNCIL

SUMMER/FALL 1997



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THE PARK SERVICE VS THE STEHEKIN RIVER

Barbs being built on the Stehekin River (August 1997) — SANDY WALKER PHOTO

The Wild Cascades

Journal of the North Cascades Conservation Council

EDITOR: Betty Manning

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The Wild Cascades Editor
North Cascades Conservation Council
University Station
Seattle, WA 98145-1980

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

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

MEMBERSHIP

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

The North Cascades Foundation supports the NCCC's nonpolitical efforts. Donations are tax-deductible as a 501(c)3 organization. Please make your check(s) out to the organization of your choice. The Foundation can be reached through NCCC mailing address:

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Founded in 1957

SEATTLE, WASHINGTON

Summer/Fall, 1997

It seems like anyone with a soap box these days wants to express their opinion about "user fees." Here we have, disguised as editorial comment, the thoughts of one more frustrated tax-paying bird watcher. First we had hunting and fishing licenses. So far, so good, you say. Then there were state and federal park entrance fees. This hurts a little but you can see the reasoning, right? And, of course, there was the introduction of the Sno-Park permit. Never mind that if they plowed the unwanted highways over Chinook and Washington passes, there would be little need for this program which, by the way, seems to favor sno-mobiles. The last couple years, the Forest Service has started to get out of the campground business and has turned many of them over to "hosted" camping which is run by private enterprise. It must work since you have to have reservations weeks in advance, and bring your checkbook, please. What could be next? Overnight backpacking surcharges? Access road tolls? Coin-operated visitor centers? Pay-per-visit outhouses? The possibilities are unlimited given the imagination of clever marketing people.

And now, Summer 1997, we have the infancy of the Trail-Park permit program and the dreaded yellow envelopes. So why would anyone begrudge the Forest Service a little money to keep the trails brushed out? The usual reasons I have heard my friends whine about would include casual users inconvenienced by being forced to find a vendor to purchase a permit, that a bureaucracy of ticket-givers is being spawned at the expense of old fashioned trail crews and wilderness rangers, and surely the most famous of all is "my tax dollars already pay for this stuff." I say to them "no contest." All of these things are self-evident legitimate complaints but don't really get to the heart of the matter.

Rather than fight the concept of "user pays up front," for we will surely lose, recreationists, wilderness buffs, and nature lovers must be more vigilant than ever in two key areas. First, I see dedicated funding schemes such as these permit programs being used to offset the normal appropriations

process. Feel-good politicians aided by timid administrators are sure to avoid their financial responsibilities. They already refuse to fund some legitimate resource protection requirements if a tax-cut or budget-balancing photo-opportunity can be paid for out of our other pocket. How often have we heard about a non-revenue-generating resource program such as wildlife research or stream enhancement being cut for budgetary reasons? We must counteract this trend. (As an aside, why is it okay to build more logging roads and upgrade the Mountain Loop Scenic Byway to Winnebago standards at taxpayer expense but emptying the garbage cans at a campground breaks the federal budget?) The second area where folks like us can have an impact is to monitor the use of monies generated by user-fee programs. We need to be on the lookout for inappropriate projects and elaborate engineering solutions which degrade the environment. Example: the trailhead parking lots at Big Four and on the Middle Fork Snoqualmie are clearly bigger than necessary, beautifully paved, and accessibility aside, look too darn expensive. Paving over low-elevation forest land is not easy to justify. Let's resist a bridge which can pass two fully loaded horses where a foot log and a ford will do. Let's demand a stop to the commercialism which is accelerating in our public recreation areas. Let's have some say in how our money is spent or not spent.

I see more and more attempts by public agencies to fund recreation and tourism with special fees rather than the old method of allowing society as a whole to build and maintain infrastructure. Good or bad, right or wrong, the trend looks unstoppable. We must protect the public resource. As a start, how about citizen groups being included in prioritization of project funding and budgetary preparations? Anybody know how to get started? Anybody disagree? Letters to the editor gratefully accepted.

Marc Bardsley

A Parting Message

DEAN APOSTOL

NOTE: The following is an excerpt from Apostol's message, printed in Inner Voice, July-August 1997, published by FSEEE.

Dear Everyone:

This letter marks my final exit from the bosom of the Forest Service, where I've maintained a cluttered desk and drawing table for nearly 11 years at the Mt. Hood. I've been threatening to leave since very shortly after arriving, and as a consequence have been composing and recomposing this letter for years. My plan was to verbally batter the Forest Leadership Team. But I've come to see them as a group of tired, stressed managers with little influence or control. I thought I would do a final kick at the assorted philistines who still pine for the "good ole days" when "the outfit" knew its mission, obeyed orders, stomped out fires, and let nature know who the boss was. But I see so few left, and their spirits so shot...why bother?

I thought I would lecture the environmentalists who also would set people and nature apart, fencing the community out of their own forest in a doomed but noble attempt to save nature from human greed...but for the most part these are my friends, and have many arguments and data on their side.

Then I thought...Dean, you are dealing with the galley slaves! Go after Dombeck ...and that lot of "senior executive service" folks who have let their ambitions exceed their grasp. Mike Dombeck...is still an enigma. I like what he is saying about the need for breaking the Forest Service out from its protective shield and his promotion of honest collaboration with local communities. I hope he actually will light a hot fire under local Forest Leadership Teams. I've decided to focus on the Forest Service itself. This is a strange thing for me to do. I've always maintained that THE FOREST SERVICE DOES NOT REALLY EXIST. The "forest" does exist. I can look at it, walk through it, lie on the duff and let the dappled light dance over my closed

Dean Apostol recently retired from the U.S. Forest Service after 11 years with the Mount Hood National Forest. Apostol, who was the head forest landscape architect on the Mount Hood, lives near Gresham, Ore., and now works as a private consultant. This spring, during his last week on the job, he sent a message via the Forest Service's internal e-mail system to his colleagues on the Mount Hood, sharing his thoughts about the state of the Forest Service.

eyes, climb a high rock and gaze out over the contours of the land. It's really there.

But the "Forest Service?" The building I work in is rented. It is filled with people doing various tasks, assigned from some trickle-down budget process emanating from Washington, D.C.

The property belongs to the government. Not a single pencil belongs to something called the Forest Service. There are persons who patrol the forest, wearing green duds that belong to themselves. There is no "thing" anyone can truly point to and say "THAT is the Forest Service."

A lot of people believe it does exist, including most of you reading this. So let me address this as if it were a fact. If the Forest Service actually does exist, it will cease to exist in a few short years because I've come to the sad conclusion that the Forest Service exists primarily to "service" its own interests and continued existence, rather than those of the forest or the human community. Using the timber program as the vehicle for internal advancement led the Forest Service down a path from which it cannot correct itself. Too many self-reinforcing feedback loops have been anchored into place. The timber program became a numerical "target" that led to reducing other programs to targets. It led to advancement of tactical soldiers

who met targets first and asked questions later. A corporate persona developed, reinforced by the quasi-military structure. Creative thinking was not encouraged, except that which led to target attainment.

No one bothered to ask the people who own the forest (a) whether they think these targets are a good idea, and (b) who should be making these decisions. We have the tattered remnants of an agency that has lost its core purpose (providing the nation's timber supply through tree farming), has reluctantly begun to embrace a new one (managing the forest ecosystem), but is woefully short on skills or organizational culture needed to make this shift. The vultures are circling.

If local economic interests can no longer get at what they believe to be their resources, then by God they will get rid of the Forest Service and find another way in. And who is there to say, "Wait a minute, we NEED the Forest Service to manage the people's forest." The environmentalists? Only as a holding pattern against the Wise-users. The agenda of the environmental community is shifting towards a "no-cut" policy for all federal forests. What once seemed extreme is mainstream. The general public? We are just not high on their agenda.

The root of the problem is that the Forest Service is an extremely inward-focused organization—pathologically so. Its motto, "Caring for the Land and Serving People," is a farce. It has never done a very good job of either. I'm not saying the people who work here don't care about the land or the people, because I think they do. I just mean they don't often act in the best interests of either the land or the people, because the organizational imperative is to serve the agency. This imperative drives nearly all decisions. Those who wish to get ahead understand this. The agency writes the tune, plays the music, dances to it, and congratulates itself for its genius. The people who own the forest and live near it are reduced to

unwelcome “interest groups,” or “outsiders” who don’t understand “our program.”

To care for the land, one must know the land and feel a part of it. This means developing a sensual, as well as a technical, awareness of the forest. My friends in the Forest Service are getting very good at collecting bits of data about the forest and abstracting tables and maps. But it is rare to hear any internal discussion of, or to see anything written about, the forest as a sensual place.

I’ve had the good fortune to come into contact with a number of outstanding landowners and managers over the past several years. These include individuals from small Midwestern conservation districts, the Florida State Parks Department, the Menomonee Indians of central Wisconsin, and some of the small forest landowners and “ecoforestry” advocates I’ve met here in the Northwest. These people have technical competence, measuring tools, test plots, even GIS data bases. Good stuff.

I hate to be the one to break this news, but these are the true “conservation leaders” of our time. They have a feel for the land that I rarely experience in my Forest Service colleagues, and almost never have seen in the managerial class. I’m not saying it doesn’t exist, but it is highly atrophied, and when it does come to the surface goes unrewarded. This is a consequence of treating the forest as an inanimate source for targets and promotions. It’s a “thing” to be acted upon, not a community deserving of our respect and reverence.

To care for the land, one must know the land and feel a part of it. This means developing a sensual, as well as a technical, awareness of the forest.

I’ve heard it said by Forest Service managers that “the people are deeply divided” on natural resource issues, hence the need for reliance on a formal and legalistic process in our dealings rather

than an informal and personal one. Perhaps this is true, but I’ve seen a lot of evidence to the contrary. I’ve been working this past year on several large scale “forest landscape design” projects in the Applegate watershed of southern Oregon. Demographically, this is about as deeply divided a community as you could dream up. On the left are aging hippies and environmentalists who moved to the area in the 60s and 70s. On the right are the ranchers, loggers, and much of the political establishment. Yet a “community values survey” found a remarkable consensus on most of the core natural resource issues. People on all sides want a strong economy, a healthy forest, salmon in the rivers, and an attractive landscape. A good number of citizens have proved willing to roll up their sleeves, and work with the BLM, Forest Service, and each other toward these ends.

Yet the chief conflict is the need for agencies to manage for “targets” at a pace faster than the citizens can keep up with, using terms and data they cannot understand, and relying on legalistic processes over informal networks. The Forest Service and BLM managers are honestly trying to listen to the community and build long-term relations.

If agencies fail to nurture and serve this emerging constituency, they will lose their last best hope to survive. Those in positions to promote the success of these efforts had better be willing to do everything they can, including the funneling of resources and bending of dumb rules, to provide every chance.

I’d like to close this with a little paradox. It’s sort of a Zen puzzle. If the Forest Service (which does not after all, really exist) wants to continue managing the people’s forest, then it needs to stop acting in its own interest, and instead focus on the interests of the forest and the surrounding human community. Since targets are imposed from Washington, they cannot be appropriate standards for decisions. I’m not saying managers should do away with timber sales, grazing permits, or campground development.

I’m suggesting that local managers, rooted in place, working as honest

collaborators in a spirit of equality with the community, can best determine what to cut, where to burn, and when to do it. Funds could come from the U.S. taxpayers, or the state, or the local county, or from local bake sales. The laws of the nation would still apply. I don’t think the Forest Service needs to await an act of Congress to shift its focus from itself to the forest and the community. It’s in the power of each worker, from clerk to manager, to make big and small decisions in this way.

Ironically, if this was the way the Forest Service did its work, it might find that it actually does exist, and many people will want it to continue.

About FSEEE

Forest Service Employees for Environmental Ethics is committed to forging a socially responsible value system within the U.S. Forest Service based on a land ethic that ensures ecologically and economically sustainable resource management.

We believe that the land is a public trust, to be passed with reverence from generation to generation. The Forest Service and other public agencies must follow the footsteps of Aldo Leopold, a pioneer of conservation, and become leaders in the quest for a new resource ethic.

WHAT WE DO

Public Education FSEEE produces and distributes a variety of publications covering issues facing our national forests. These include the bimonthly *Inner Voice* and the FSEEE E-Activist, an electronic journal covering pressing issues.

Monitoring and Organizing FSEEE serves as a vigorous watchdog for the Forest Service, keeping close tabs on the agency’s successes and failures. FSEEE also facilitates communication between reformers within and outside of the agency.

Protecting Integrity and Ethics FSEEE helps Forest Service employees who take risks to protect our natural resources.

[*Inner Voice* is published bimonthly by Forest Service Employees for Environmental Ethics, PO Box 11615, Eugene, OR 97440. E-mail: afseee@afseee.org Call or write for subscription rates.]

Stehekin Endangered by Condo Project

BY CAROLYN MCCONNELL

Stehekin is a community of individuals. It's hard to organize us. And yet we are united by our common love for the spectacular and unique valley we live in. Upon rare occasion, when there is a threat to the valley, that love overcomes our distaste for joining. Such an occasion arose in the 1950s, when residents such as Ray Courtney and my grandfather saw that the valley they loved was endangered by logging, and organized to push for a North Cascades National Park.

Another of those rare occasions is now. When, on August 11th, Chelan County Board of Adjustments granted William Stifter, a cardiac surgeon from Spokane, a permit for 13 condominiums, a house, an electric tram, a sewage treatment plant, roads, trails, and an 8-slip dock at Logger's Point and the cliffs above it, it was clear that this development would change the Stehekin community forever. Within a few days of word of the decision reaching the valley, a group of residents began meeting to try to stop this inappropriate development. They quickly discovered that they were not alone in their outrage; of the over 800 people who have signed a petition opposing the Logger's Point project at last count, 45 were Stehekin residents — both summer and year-round — a whopping figure given Stehekinites' love of peace and privacy and our general contrariety. Many who did not sign the petition privately expressed their opposition to the development and gratitude that someone was fighting the project.

If our community has a center, it is the head of Lake Chelan. We all treasure the unspoiled panorama of the lake and Domke Mountain as we head toward the landing for mail or groceries, and the glorious view of the three B's and McGregor as we leave the landing. The view upvalley from the landing is the first view visitors have of the Stehekin Valley and the national park to which it leads. This awesome view is unique, one of the

nation's great treasures, and it would be scarred forever by 13 condominiums above Logger's Point. This complex would be visible from the lakeshore as far down as Lucerne and from the top of McGregor Mountain as a massive intrusion on the wilderness.

It is, after all, this wilderness that makes Stehekin unique and precious. The community that flourishes here does so because of its isolation and spectacular wild setting. In purely economic terms, it is the pristine Stehekin River, valley, lake, and mountains that make property here in Stehekin valuable, that bring visitors here from around the nation and the world.

Those of us who own property in Stehekin are extraordinarily privileged, and, along with our rights as property owners, we have the responsibility to use our land so that we do not harm the national heritage that Stehekin is.

There are appropriate uses for land in Stehekin — condominiums is not one of them. After an early period of activity, in the 1980s the Stehekin Community Council foundered, largely from Stehekinites' contrariety. Yet the one thing the council did agree on was that condominiums did not belong in Stehekin. Nor is the term merely linguistic; while the 13 units William Stifter plans to build are separate houses, the condominium designation allows Stifter to put more houses on the buildable portion of his land than the law would allow otherwise.

There are many technical difficulties with Stifter's plan. The land is not stable, say Park Service geologists, though the experts hired by Stifter claim it is. Our electric plant is already overburdened and experiences frequent outages. Think what a disgusting mess the Logger's Point sewer system could create in the event of a long outage. Yet perhaps all these technical problems can be solved (with enough money, almost anything is possible). This condominium complex would still be categorically inappropriate in Stehekin. It

would open the door to intense development of the valley (there are several sizable chunks of undeveloped private land) and end forever Stehekin's chance to prove that a community can coexist in harmony with wilderness.

It is a sad irony that the logging that threatened the valley in the 1950s had its staging area at Logger's Point. Logger's Point is not natural — it is a piece of the lake that was filled to make a place where logging trucks could turn around and dump their logs to be rafted downlake. The depredations which were stopped by the establishment of the Glacier Peak Wilderness and the North Cascades National Park live on in this new Logger's Point development, and will only finally be prevented by park purchase of the property. A land trade won't do it — this would only shift the development elsewhere in the valley. There have been rumors that the entire development project is a fabrication, a chess move on Stifter's part to up the price he gets from the park. If this is so, it is an outrageous rip-off of the taxpayer. This community and everyone who loves Stehekin should protect all of our tax dollars by making it clear that Stehekin is not a place where anyone can build condominiums.

For more information on opposition to the Logger's Point project, write:

**Stehekin Alert
P.O. Box 303
Stehekin, WA 98852**

Group trying to stop Stehekin condo project

RICHARD UHLHORN

A group calling themselves "Stehekin Alert" have organized a last ditch effort to try and prevent a condominium development by William and Patricia Stifter at Logger's Point in Stehekin. The development calls for 13 condominiums, a house, an electric tram, roads, trails, an 8-slip dock on the point and a private sewer system to service the units on the cliffs above the point. The Chelan County Board of Adjustment approved the permit for this project on August 11. September 5 was the last day an appeal to Chelan County Superior Court could be made. Concerns about this proposed development first came to light at Lake Chelan Water Quality Advisory Committee meeting on August 14 when Chairman Jim Wall questioned the need for the committee to be included in the agency comment period. Wall's concern was the potential impact a private sewer system would have on the lake if and when the Chelan County PUD hydroelectric plant in Stehekin had a power outage. According to Wall, power outages are frequent in Stehekin and he was concerned that a power outage could result in a sewage spill to Lake Chelan.

The Stehekin Alert organization feels the development would "forever alter the rare beauty of the Stehekin Valley. . ." The release further accuses the Board of Adjustment of failing to question the appropriateness of any development at Logger's Point and accepted the developer's claim that the land is stable despite slopes of 65 degrees ... Chelan County Planner, John Harrington said, "This proposal has been in our system for two years. People opposed have known about this for a long time. The people in Stehekin are astute. They have known all

Continued on Page 8

Stehekin Alert

No Development at Logger's Point • No Condos in Stehekin

On August 11, 1997, the Chelan County Board of Adjustment approved a permit to allow 13 condos on the steep slope above Logger's Point ½ mile above the Stehekin landing at the wild and beautiful head of Lake Chelan. The plans also call for a house and an 8-slip dock on the point, and an electric tram, roads, trails, and sewer system to the 13 units on the precipitous hillside above the point. This development would forever alter the rare beauty of the Stehekin Valley and have a devastating effect on the small community that the attorney for William and Patricia Stifter, the developer of Logger's Point, himself called unique. He is right — Stehekin is unique and special; it is one of the great scenic climaxes of the nation, unreachable by road, a place that has remained wild and unspoiled. This tiny valley is, in fact, uniquely precious and uniquely vulnerable. Furthermore, the Logger's Point project would set a frightening precedent for intense development of the Stehekin Valley, and would irrevocably undermine the special character of this community. This large development, the first condominium complex in Stehekin, would forever scar the awesome views of upper Lake Chelan. It would be visible from the lakeshore as far down as Lucerne and from the top of McGregor Mountain as a massive intrusion on this spectacular wilderness. Though the Board of Adjustment failed to question the appropriateness of any development at Logger's Point, it accepted, on questionable evidence, the developer's claim that the land is stable. Yet the hillside above Logger's Point slopes as much as 65 degrees, and failure of the roads and sewer system would cause devastating impacts on human, animal and aquatic life. The price is too high. The cost to Stehekin residents will show up as rising property taxes. A greater cost, however, in the degradation of our national scenic and natural heritage, which Stehekin is.

What You Can Do To Help

Please write North Cascades National Park Superintendent William Paleck urging the park to purchase the Logger's Point property, fee simple acquisition from a willing seller, and expressing your opposition to any land trade, which would allow this development in another location.

Superintendent William Paleck
North Cascades National Park
2105 Highway 20
Sedro Woolley, Washington 98284

Write Stehekin's local and national representatives, expressing dismay that a development of this nature is being allowed in a national treasure. Urge Senator Gorton to appropriate money so that the park can buy the property outright.

U.S. Senator Slade Gorton
730 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

U.S. Representative Richard Hastings
1323 Longworth House Office Bldg.
Washington DC 20515

Urge the Chelan County Commissioners and State Representative Parlette to work to protect the unique Stehekin community through appropriate zoning legislation.

Chelan County Commissioners
401 Washington
Wenatchee, WA 98801

Please send copies of your letters to us. All donations are gratefully accepted to cover our printing and mailing costs.

Stehekin Alert
P.O. Box 303
Stehekin, WA 98852

On the Matter of Stehekin

Stehekin Overview

BY CAROLYN MCCONNELL

The Stehekin airstrip is three for three — Stehekin had its third plane crash in three years this July. The accident was again passed off as pilot error — this time the pilot misread the wind sock and overshot the runway, crashing into the wetland beyond. But as the accidents mount up, that argument is beginning to seem about as suspect as the one about guns (“Guns don’t kill people; people kill people”). There is plenty of scope for error and very little room for it on the Stehekin airstrip.

This year’s crash, unlike last year’s, did not start a forest fire. The plane simply smashed into the swamp — a swamp that has already been illegally channeled and manipulated by flyers. Who knows what pollutants oozed into the wetland this time.

From trails above the valley, the airstrip is a ghastly scar. But it is worse up close. To walk on it is to walk on a moonscape. Between stretches of sterile dirt, nothing grows except knapweed and rush skeleton weed — two noxious alien weeds brought into the Stehekin Valley by airplane and invading the valley’s fragile ecosystem from the fertile breeding ground of the airstrip. I spent a lot of time on the airstrip this summer, long, taxpayer-financed hours in an effort to control these weeds. This effort is doomed as long as the airstrip remains open. It does so for the pleasure and convenience of a few wealthy individuals, at the great expense of us all. Superintendent Bill Paleck could close the airstrip tomorrow — but he does not. It is only a matter of time before he has a deadly crash or a devastating fire storm on his conscience.

Bill Paleck has apparently decided that his bread is buttered on the side of private interests and that protecting resources will get him nowhere. In no issue that faces him in Stehekin has he decided in favor of the national, long-term interest. In order to placate a few private land- and business-

owners, he has ordered the upper Stehekin Road re-opened. To do so, he has misled the public about the extent and cost of rebuilding, squandered the dramatic new opportunity the flood of 1995 offered, ignored the presence of nesting spotted owls near the road and of Cascade frogs in the former road bed, and refused to listen to the voice of reason. With work set to begin on a \$500,000 bridge across Park Creek that will extend the road about a mile (it doesn’t take higher math to figure out that at that rate this is one expensive road), Paleck has informed no one that a half mile below the bridge site is another large washout. It is more than a washout; it is a riverbed. Presumably Paleck plans to manipulate the river there, secretly, without asking the public whether it wants to spend its money on this kind of environmental folly. There are 30 pieces of bank protection on the Stehekin River, legal and illegal, private and park-service sponsored, and that number is growing all the time. Most of that growth is at the hands of the Park Service.

Yet there is cause for hope in Stehekin. It does not come, of course, from bureaucrats. It comes from the river itself. If you walk along the Stehekin Road between Cottonwood and Flat Creek, you can almost hear the river chortling as it runs in the former road bed. The stream is light-lite and green and plopping with frogs. Where vehicles once coated the trees with dust and exhaust, tiger lilies and valerian sparkle with drops of dew.

Cause for hope comes too from the human community. For the first time in over a decade, members of the Stehekin community have come together to protect the valley. Stehekin Alert has organized to prevent the Logger’s Point development. But it may be the start of something bigger. Viva la revolucion!

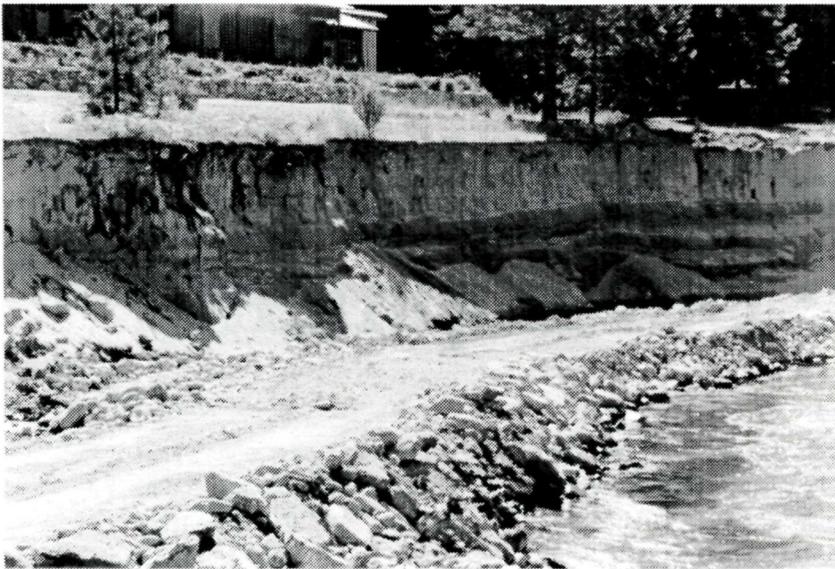
(EDITOR NOTE: See “Stehekin Alert”, page 7.)

Group trying to stop Stehekin condo project

Continued from Page 7

along that this project was going to come back up for approval.”

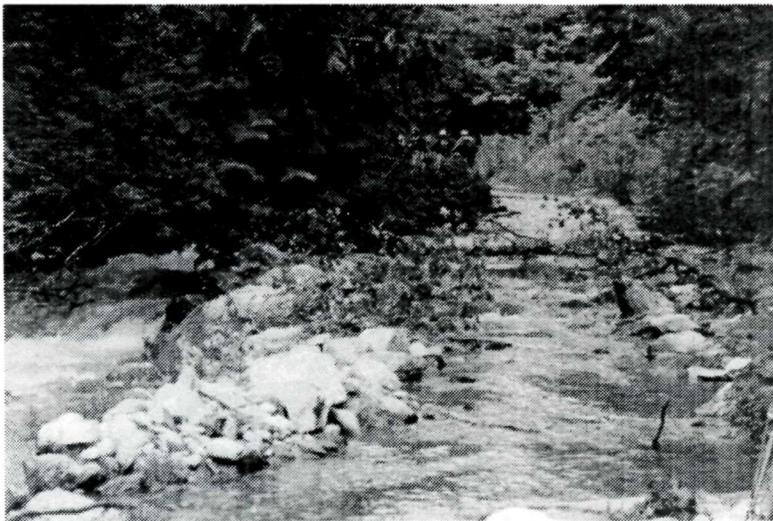
The original application was submitted in November, 1994, according to Harrington. The only appealable item would have been the SEPA (State Environmental Policy Act) checklist “If they missed a critical element such as a sewer plant being dependent on power, it could be appealed,” said Harrington. . . . The National Park Service commented negatively on the project in Stehekin, including a letter and sending a representative to the Board of Adjustment meeting. “They (Stehekin residents) all knew this was going on,” stated Phil Campbell, NPS Management Assistant for the Lake Chelan National Recreation Area. “Most are summer cabin owners.” Campbell stated that the NPS followed the Land Protection Plan from the General Management Plan for the Lake Chelan National Recreation Area in their opposition of the development. The NPS is currently in negotiations to purchase the land: “We would like to see Chelan County adopt the same guidelines for development in Stehekin as they have in the Icicle Canyon area of Leavenworth,” remarked Campbell.



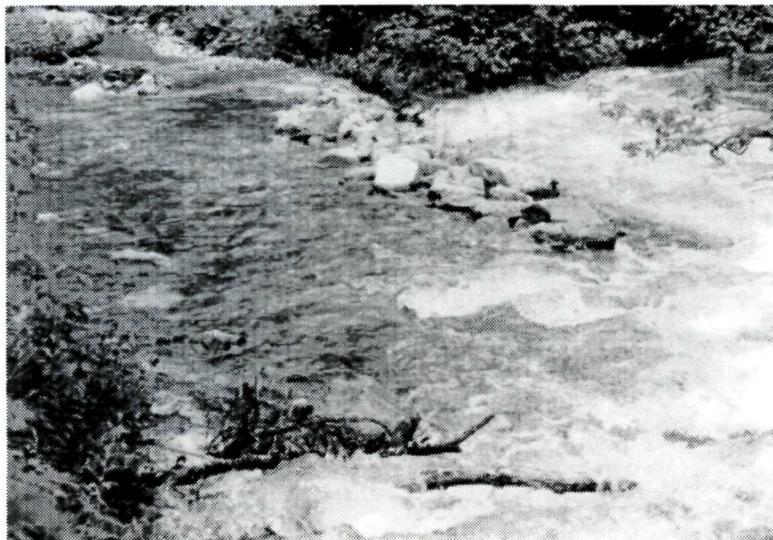
View downstream, Stehekin River. NPS bulldozed a dike-road near Sherer property. The Stehekin Valley road runs between river and house.

Views of the Stehekin River Reclaiming Its Own

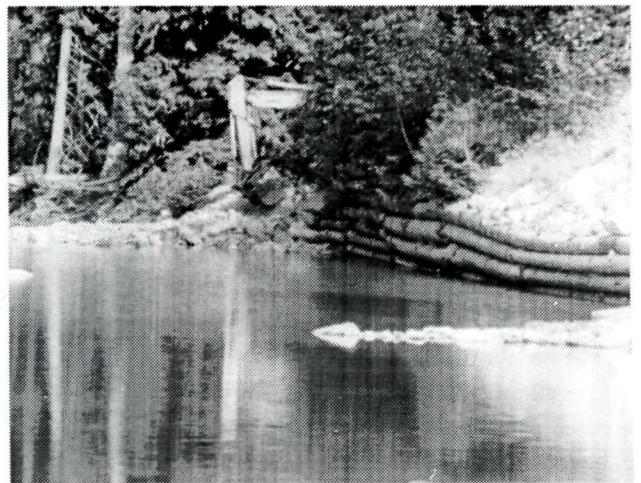
SANDY WALKER PHOTOS



Stehekin river flowing in road about 1½ mile above Bridge Creek and ½ mile below Park Creek. (July 1997)



Stehekin river cutting into road between Bridge Creek and Cottonwood Camp, ½ mile downriver from Park Creek. (July 1997)



Barbs being built on Stehekin River along Company Creek Road at dike, built earlier. (August 1997)

The Methow Valley Confronts Another Large-Scale Development

Environmental controversy continues in one of Washington state's most beautiful mountain valleys as citizens challenge a development proposal that will drastically alter important wildlife habitat and change forever their rural quality of life. The current development proposal is the fourth in a series of proposals floated over the last two decades for the upper Methow Valley in eastern Washington. Each prior proposal has met defeat after protests by a local environmental group, the Methow Valley Citizens' Council (MVCC).

The highly controversial Arrowleaf Resort, proposed by the R.D. Merrill Company of Seattle, Washington, would be located on an environmentally sensitive site in the upper Methow Valley in Okanogan County, Washington. The proposed resort site occupies 1208 acres in an area of great beauty and critical wildlife habitat. MVCC and the many valley residents they represent are concerned that the resort will result in significant irreversible adverse impacts to air and water quality, water availability and local wildlife populations and that it will forever alter the rural character of the Methow Valley.

Initially, the R.D. Merrill Company promised an environmentally sensitive resort and enlisted MVCC's help in designing one. Full agreement, however, was never reached. The final resort plan includes a large-scale housing subdivision, an 18-hole golf course, commercial shops, restaurants, condominiums, a hotel, hiking and ski trails, and an equestrian center. The EIS (Environmental Impact Statement) for Arrowleaf failed to address the environmental concerns of MVCC and the

concerned citizens who signed and sent a petition to the county commissioners asking for reduced density for the resort.

Okanogan County approved the project despite the developer's failure to acknowledge its many negative impacts. The county commissioners granted a rezone for the resort even though the plan is in blatant violation of Okanogan County's zoning prohibitions against

destination resorts with "significant adverse effects to environmental and natural features." (17.20.010: Zoning 92) These actions forced MVCC to take legal action.

MVCC's appeal of the county's decision to approve the plan was heard in Chelan Superior Court in July 1997 with the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife and the Department of Ecology testifying on MVCC's behalf. A decision is



Proposed Arrowleaf development area: The western end of the development property would be on the valley floor to the right of the base of the large cliff known as Goat Wall. (Goat Peak Lookout is above, in the snow.) The Goat Wall is visible rising above the property when standing on the property. —ISABELLE SPOHN PHOTO

expected after September.

Air Quality

The Methow Valley Citizens' Council is concerned about the impacts on air quality from the use of fireplaces, wood stoves and cars by the new residents and visitors that the resort will attract. Arrowleaf will have 690 dwelling units with 239 fireplaces. The burning curtailment plan proposed for the resort would not go into effect until after the Clean Air Act has been violated.

Last fall, clearing and burning for Arrowleaf's proposed golf course resulted in heavy air pollution for extended periods of time. A local advocacy group complained to the developer about "a valley full of smoke" and recounted that "many elderly residents had to curtail their outdoor activities as did skiers training for the winter race season." During the

burning, heavy smoke penetrated well into the Pasayten Wilderness — a Class I airshed. Slash burning was not addressed in the EIS.

Water

The Methow River at the site of the proposed Arrowleaf resort is Class AA, the cleanest water rating in the nation. The water demands of the development will diminish in-stream flows, endangering the Chinook salmon and steelhead (now listed as endangered) and impacting downstream farmers and ranchers. The project is still without a sewage-treatment plan proven to meet local groundwater quality standards. That and the fact that toxic chemicals will be used on the golf course, pose a serious threat to the ground and surface waters of the Methow Valley and all valley residents living downstream.

Wildlife

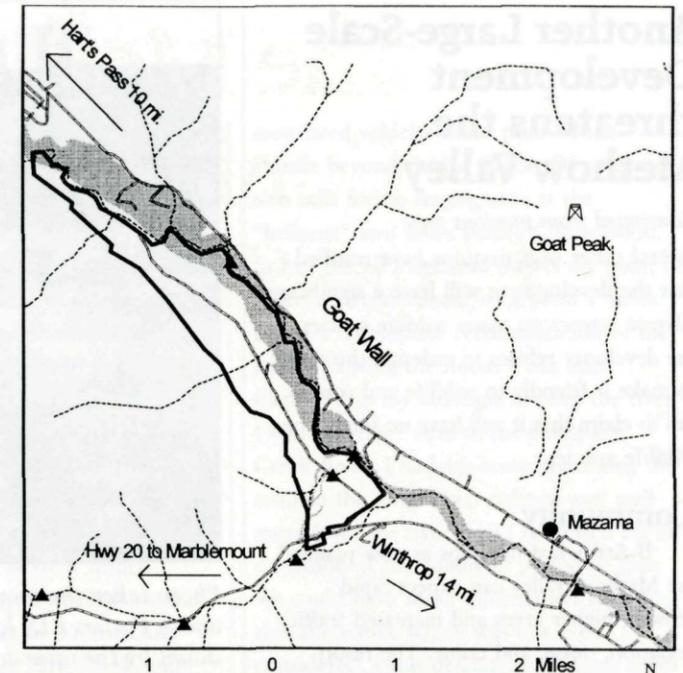
The Arrowleaf site occupies a critical area in the upper Methow Valley at the confluence of Early Winters Creek and the main stem of the Methow River. This scenic area is a "hot spot" for many fish and wildlife species. Salmon migrate up the Methow to spawn in Early Winters Creek and the main Methow River adjacent to the Arrowleaf site. A large portion of the Methow mule deer herd migrate up and down the valley in the spring and fall as they move from their winter ranges to their summer range and fawning habitat. The site is a key spring staging area for mule deer.

The Arrowleaf site and surrounding National Forest lands form a primary

activity center for northern spotted owls (a threatened species). Numerous sightings of gray wolf and grizzly bear (both species are endangered) have been reported on the property surrounding Arrowleaf. The Arrowleaf property provides critical habitat for bald eagles and harlequin ducks. Many other species which are of conservation concern migrate through or inhabit the property. The Arrowleaf developer has ignored these facts and is planning to destroy or intensely fragment most of the wildlife habitat on the site.

Forest clearing, grading, construction and road building will result in extensive alteration of the Arrowleaf property. The tremendous increase in human activity and vastly increased traffic volumes and noise will disturb wildlife throughout the upper Methow Valley. Mule deer migration will be greatly impaired, if not blocked, by the development. Song birds and amphibian species will be adversely affected.

Although experts from the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife and



Arrowleaf Proposed Resort in relation to floodplains, fish redds, and nearby areas

Continued on next page

Another Large-Scale Development threatens the Methow Valley

Continued from previous page

several other organizations have testified that the development will have a significant adverse impact on many wildlife species, the developer refuses to redesign the resort to make it friendly to wildlife and continues to claim that it will have no impact on wildlife species.

Community

If Arrowleaf develops as now planned, the Methow Valley can expect rapid growth, higher taxes and increased traffic, pollution, noise, and crime. The resort would accelerate the transformation of the Methow Valley from a peaceful rural area to an urban environment.

Goals

The Methow Valley Citizens' Council wants passionately to see this uniquely beautiful and critical acreage permanently protected. They continue to search for a like-minded buyer. If the property must be developed, however, MVCC would like to see the size and density of the project reduced, a greater clustering of smoke-free units, substantial wildlife corridors and a completely non-toxic golf course.

MVCC's legal battle has relied heavily on the donations of time and expertise and the financial help of many generous supporters. Members and supporters have already given over \$150,000 in time and expertise and \$27,700 in financial contributions. MVCC is currently struggling to raise the \$43,500 still owed for legal fees and court costs.

Reach the Methow Valley Citizens' Council at:

PO Box 774
Twisp WA 98856
509-997-2556
e-mail: mvcc@methow.com

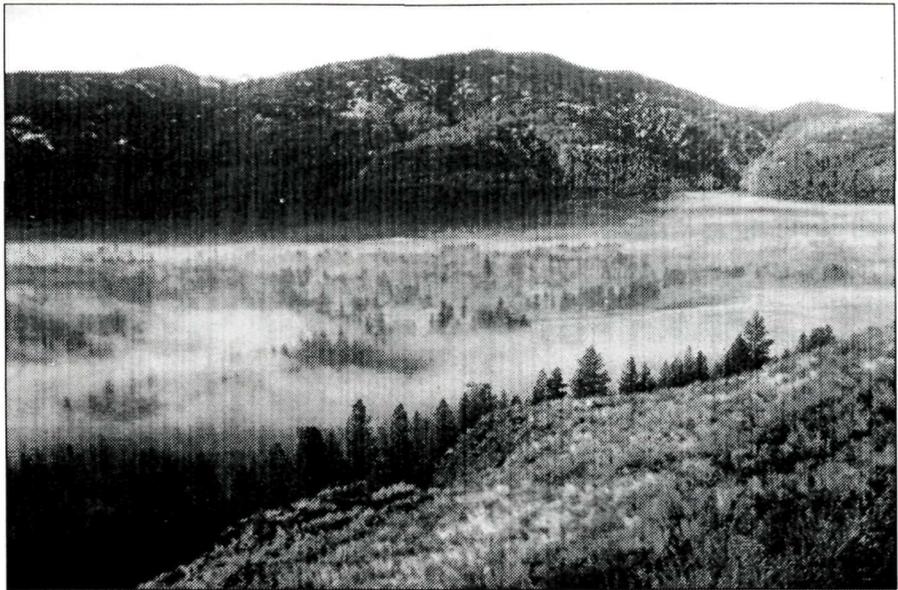
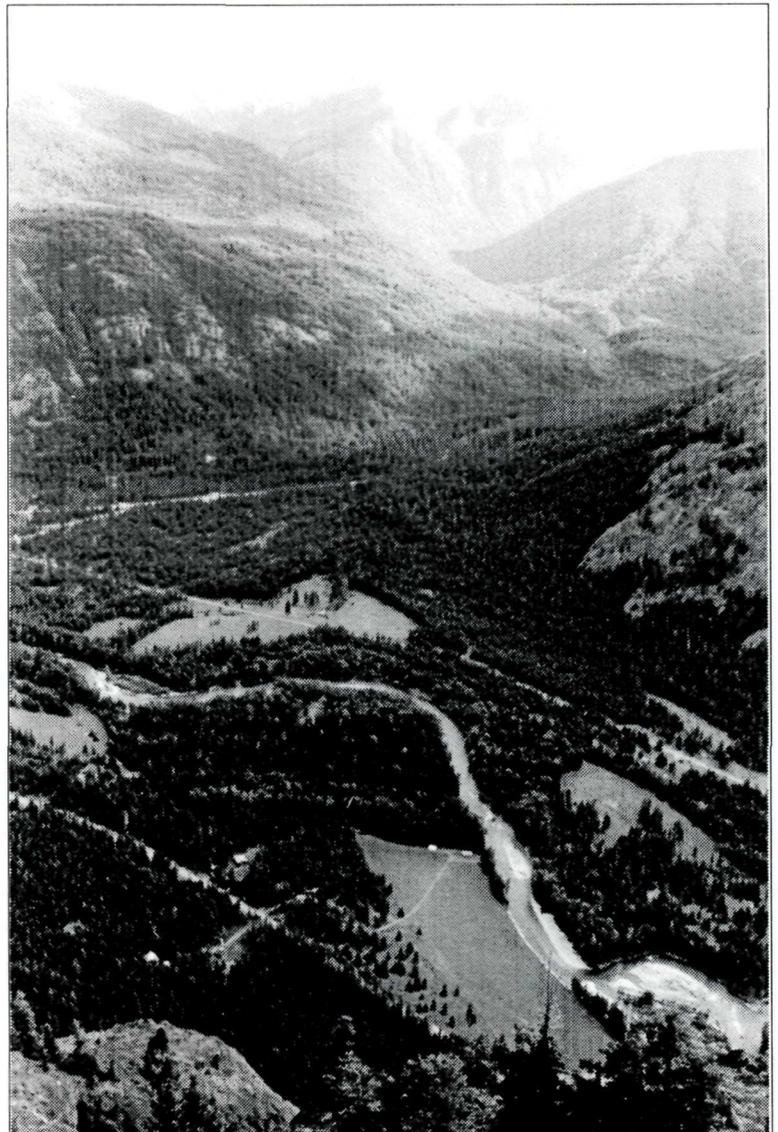


Photo taken the morning of November 11, 1996, on the Goat Peak Road above Fosters P.D. looking up the valley. Smoke and dirty air are being held down by the inversion.



Overlooking the Arrowleaf baseland with Sandy Butte and Mount Gardner in the background. The highway winds up to the back of the photo.
— MAC
SHELTON
PHOTO

A Road Runs Through It

BY SANDY WALKER

The Stehekin Valley. Truly a road runs through it. I am speaking of the Stehekin River Valley. The Stehekin River runs down from Cascade Pass to Lake Chelan through both the North Cascades National Park proper and the Lake Chelan National Recreation Area. Along side it for about 25 miles on one side and four on the other is a road maintained amidst controversy by the National Park Service. I wrote last October in this same publication about efforts made in opposition to the repair of the road following the Flood of '95. These efforts to prevent redevelopment of the road above Car Wash Falls have failed and the NPS has finished this spring and summer its proposed construction as far as Bridge Creek. It is now working on the road from Bridge Creek to Cottonwood Camp. The fact is that in the past year a tremendous amount of work and money (hundreds of thousands of dollars) has been spent on building roads and on controlling the river so that it will not destroy the roads. Since October we have been asked to comment on three more road construction plans: replacement of Harlequin Bridge, reinforcement of the Company Creek Road, and reopening of the Upper Stehekin Valley Road from Bridge Creek to Cottonwood campground. In each case the NPS has, after the comment period, endorsed its "preferred alternative." As I wrote previously, I have been advocating closure of the upper valley road and its conversion to a trail from Car Wash Falls to Cottonwood Camp. I continued to argue after last writing that this was the best and cheapest solution to preserve the resources and serve the visitor, the stated mandate of the NPS. I have continued to argue with the NPS that it was wrong to have failed to acknowledge that the foundation and existing conditions for a decision regarding the road were very different in 1996 after the flood of '95 than they were before that when the decision was made on the GMP. Furthermore I continue to feel that the public was

mislead by the presentation of the road constructions piece by piece. If the public had known that the road all the way to Cottonwood would not be opened unless the river was altered, it might well have agreed that the investment of money and the destruction of the environment was not worth what we have now paid.

When I returned to Stehekin this summer, the road construction from Car Wash Falls to Shady Campground had almost been completed and the beautiful trail that it had been remained only a memory. As I traveled beyond Bridge Creek I was surprised (and thrilled) to find first a very large boulder in the road and then a half a mile before Park Creek (only about a mile and a half beyond Bridge Creek) the river had made another incursion on the road. It seemed as if Nature was making another statement, and the NPS would not be able to carry through its plan without interfering with the flow of the river. Because of a large rock outcropping a car could not get by.

For most of the summer my hopes were fulfilled that the NPS would let Nature have its way. The large rock quickly disappeared, but it was only in late August that the river dropped to a level where the NPS felt it could reestablish the road. As of this date we can assume that the frogs dwelling in the still waters have been sacrificed to the progress of civilization, and the road is open to Park Creek where the bridge is being reconstructed.

Needless to say the comment period for the upper road from Bridge Creek to Cottonwood Camp last winter was another frustrating disappointment. This time half the comments favored "no action" and yet the NPS went ahead with its plan. Continually the NPS has justified its actions with the "recently approved" GMP, yet this justification flies in the face of the fact that the "preferred alternative" endorsed by the NPS to open the upper road to all motorized traffic and to build a temporary staging area above Flat Creek is contradicted by the GMP which calls for no

motorized vehicles other than a Park Shuttle beyond Bridge Creek. Of course it also calls for no staging area at the "heliport" two miles before Cottonwood. In fact the NPS decision proves my point of "special circumstances"—a point I insist calls for a complete reconsideration of the road following the flood. I was also frustrated in my attempts to keep the river "wild and free" next to the Company Creek Road. I had advocated returning the road to the established right-of-way well away from the river. I had requested for an extension of the comment period so that we could have more information regarding this alternative which was not even considered. I was denied on the basis again that the GMP had already considered and rejected that plan. As a result we have a series of "barbs" placed into river with more still to be built next to the Company Creek road. I have to acknowledge that in this case I am describing a location where there is private property in the NRA not the Park proper, but it seems to me that what we are doing is tranquilizing one of the most vibrant natural elements in the valley. It appears that the prevailing philosophy is that, if you can disguise human intervention, then it is acceptable. Would we endorse tranquilizing the wildlife too? I am imagining tranquilized bears roaming the valley. The river is a powerful force. This is the National Park system. What we see here is humans trying to control and contain nature. This is not appropriate or consistent with this area's stated purpose.

There are many other salient issues current in the Stehekin Valley now, issues which anyone who espouses an environmental ethic should be concerned about: the Harlequin bridge construction, the massive incursion by the river at the Sherer property where a dike has been built to save the road, the latest airplane crash, and so forth, and not including the permit to develop Logger's Point and the impending land exchanges in the park's near future. I

Continued on next page

can only urge all readers to write the park superintendent and the appropriate senators on all these issues even though my efforts have fallen on unresponsive ears in the NPS bureaucracy. I am alarmed at the fact that the NPS has not been responsive to environmental concerns, that our efforts have had no impact on the issues I have discussed, and that the NPS has in fact rendered the comments of concerned citizens meaningless with its seemingly arbitrary decision-making process. I would suggest that this is also subject for communication to all the appropriate parties.

I close with a reminder of the basic reasons why so many fought so hard to preserve Stehekin and all the North Cascades in its natural state free from human desecration. That effort did not end with the establishment of the park. We need to take guidance and inspiration from those who established the park and to continue to work with them to sustain their vision.

September 26, 1997

Corrections to Article

"I regret that my few changes to my October 31 letter from Stehekin did not make it into the last *The Wild Cascades*. (See TWC, Spring 1997, "Letter from Stehekin," pp 7-8 — Editor.)

These changes had been kindly supplied to me by the North Cascades National Park staff. I was writing about the road in the upper Stehekin Valley in the Park proper. I had stated that Dead Man's Curve had been "recently" named. It had been named this perhaps more than 20 years ago by the National Park Service shuttle drivers.

Today Dead Man's Curve has been reduced by NPS dynamite to a shadow of its former self, and its rocks have been fixed to the river bed to shore up the road from Car Wash Falls to Shady Campground.

City Light buys wildlife land to make amends for 3 dams

BY LARRY LANGE, SEATTLE POST-INTELLIGENCER

Seattle has bought more than 6,000 acres in the Skagit and Nooksack River valleys to fulfill its promise to replace wildlife habitat destroyed by three City Light dams, city officials said yesterday.

Margaret Pageler, chairwoman of the City Council utilities committee, said she'll recommend that the full council accept deeds for 5,214 acres of wooded and undeveloped land that will become new habitat. Acceptance is expected Monday or the following week, she said.

Most of the land, 3,991 acres, is on the South Fork of the Nooksack River north of the community of Hamilton in Skagit County. Two parcels — one of 688 acres, another of 373 acres — are south of the Skagit River and the North Cascades Highway near Rockport.

A 162-acre parcel, bought in May, is in the Sauk River Valley about two miles northeast of Darrington in Snohomish County, said officials of Seattle City Light, the city-owned electrical utility that owns the dams and is buying the land.

Total purchase price of the land was \$11.9 million, said Michele Lynn, City Light's land-program manager.

Added to two other Skagit Valley tracts bought by City Light and approved by the council in 1995, the proposed acquisitions bring the total acreage to 6,019, at a purchase cost of \$13.9 million.

The purchases will be "a substantial benefit, we think, for wildlife and recreation," said David Fluharty, board member of the North Cascades Conservation Council group that helped push for the land purchases.

The deals were part of a landmark agreement reached six years ago among City Light, several Indian tribes, state and federal agencies and the conservation council.

The agreement settled environmental issues involved in issuing new operating licenses for three city-owned dams on the

Skagit River: Gorge, Diablo and Ross.

The new lands will help offset the loss of thousands of other acres that were flooded by the three dams, which cut off areas occupied and traversed by deer, bear, elk and other animals as they searched for food and shelter.

Fluharty said the land will help restore numbers of animals lost because of the dams, providing places where they can thrive away from farms or other private holdings.

Most of the land deals the council is considering were made between City Light and Crown Pacific Ltd., a Portland-based timber company that operates a mill in Hamilton.

The Sauk River parcel was bought from an individual landowner.

One purchase, a 690-acre parcel straddling the south fork of the Nooksack, is heavily timbered, but a "good portion" of the rest of the Nooksack area land has been logged and farmed, Lynn said.

The land is accessible by road and will be open for public use.

With its planned use being for wildlife, however, "we wouldn't advertise its use as a recreational area," Lynn said.

No objections were voiced at yesterday's committee meeting, and officials said there has been no controversy about the land purchases ...

Time To Get Crackin'!

Washington Wilderness Timeline

BY HARVEY MANNING

(Excerpted from the forthcoming book, *One Hundred Classic Hikes*, The Mountaineers, to be published in the spring of 1998.)

INTRODUCTION

The historian Eric Hobsbawm says in his *The Age of Extremes*:

... a catastrophe would seem to be unavoidable. Humanity reached its first billion about 200 years ago. The next billion took 120 years to reach, the third 35 years, the fourth 15 years. At the end of the 1980s it stood at 5.2 billions and was expected to exceed 6 billions by 2000. ... If humanity is to have a recognizable future, it cannot be by prolonging the past or the present. If we try to build the third millennium on that basis, we shall fail. And the price of failure, that is to say, the alternative to a changed society, is darkness ...

The conclusion of this millennium and the beginning of the next will see whether our civilization slips off the bubble or, if the bubble should go "thip!", evaporates with it. The wilderness, once considered the antithesis, the enemy of civilization but in the past century gradually recognized as an ally, a support of our efforts to remain (or become?) civil, is in the front lines of the contest between darkness and light.

As we here offer a selection of 100 "Classics" from the 100 plus 100 plus 100 plus etceteras of our third of a century of hiking guides, a thumbnail summary is in order of the past century of wilderness preservation in Washington.

1899, Mount Rainier National Park. We like to think of it as a deed done by John Muir, who climbed The Mountain, praised it, and recommended it for a park, which it became, preceded in national glorification only by Yellowstone geysers and Sierra Canyons and sequoias. The disillusioning reality is it was a "gift" of the

Northern Pacific Railroad, which was pleased to exchange land-grant glaciers and flowers for the big fat trees lusted after by its confederates, notoriously Weyerhaeuser.

1916, National Park Act, enacted to curb the free-wheeling amorality of capitalist materialism, to codify a morality of social idealism.

1930-1935-1942, Goat Rocks and North Cascade Primitive Areas and Mount Adams Wild Area. As the new National Park Service was hitching its wagon to the new automobile, the U.S. Forest Service influenced by Aldo Leopold and the like was birthing an anti-automobile concept of wilderness preservation.

1938, Olympic National Park. The proposal, blocked for half a century by the timber industry and the U.S. Forest Service, at last done and done. To name only one of the many responsible, credit our greatest conservationist president and, to date, our last such, Franklin D. Roosevelt.

1956, Wilderness Bill introduced in Congress, bottled up year after year by logging and grazing and mining industries and the U.S. Forest Service, within which the Leopold spirit had withered with the death of Bob Marshall in 1939.

1960, Multiple-Use-Sustained Yield Act. The Forest Service formal proclamation of its self-assigned mission of "converting old-growth timber stands to fast-growing young forests." In political fact, a Maginot Line erected to frustrate panzers of the wilderness movement. The use has been multiple only in the sense of grinding up steak and potatoes to make hash. The yield was sustained only until bookkeeping sleight-of-hand no longer could conceal the over-cutting. Flim-flam from the same propaganda machine as "the greatest good of the greatest number in the long run."

1960, Glacier Peak Wilderness. The plans drawn up by Bob Marshall, buried by the Forest Service, excavated by the citizenry, and at last grudgingly conceded

— in niggardly part.

1964, National Wilderness Act. Wildernesses in National Forests and other federal jurisdictions removed from administrative whim, protected by Congress and the president. In Washington gave guarantees to Glacier Peak, Goat Rocks, and Mount Adams Wildernesses.

1968, North Cascades Act. Established North Cascades National Park and complementary Ross Lake and Lake Chelan National Recreation Areas. Reclassified North Cascade Primitive Area's eastern portion as Pasayten Wilderness, placed the western portion in the park. Small additions to Glacier Peak Wilderness.

1976, Alpine Lakes Wilderness.

1983, Mount St. Helens National Volcanic Monument.

1984, Washington Wilderness Act, sponsored by the 38 organizations of the Washington Wilderness Coalition. Modest enlargements of 4 existing wildernesses (Glacier Peak, Goat Rocks, Mount Adams, and Pasayten), establishment of 19 new wildernesses, several of some size (William O. Douglas, Henry M. Jackson, and Lake Chelan-Sawtooth), the others lesser to tiny (in the Olympics, Buckhorn, Colonel Bob, Mount Skokomish, The Brothers, and Wonder Mountain; in South Cascades, Indian Heaven and Trapper Creek; in Rainier area, Clearwater, Glacier View, Norse Peak, and Tatoosh; in North Cascades, Boulder River, Mount Baker, and Noisy-Diobud; elsewhere, Salmo-Priest and Juniper Dunes). More than 1,000,000 acres placed in the National Wilderness Preservation System.

1998. But the measure drawn up by the Washington Wilderness Coalition encompassed 2,500,000 acres — and that was itself drastically reduced from the want-lists of member groups. Is the glass one-third full? Or two-thirds empty? Note the 8-year periodicity: 1960, 1968, 1976,

Continued on page 16

Officials battle Chelan mine's toxic legacy

'Railroad Creek contributes 15 percent of the water into Lake Chelan. So it would be reasonable that the creek should provide 15 percent of the fish habitat. But instead it's almost none.'

—Al Murphy
Chelan District Ranger

Associated Press

HOLDEN VILLAGE, Chelan County — Forty years ago, the Holden Mine closed after a 20-year stint that produced \$66.5 million in gold, copper and zinc. The wealth has long since been disbursed, but the mine's poisonous legacy lives on in three mounds of tailings that taint the waters of nearby Railroad Creek, which empties into Lake Chelan 10 miles downstream. Holden Mine began operating in 1937. It was the state's largest copper mine until 1957, when the price of copper plunged 50 percent, from 47 to 24 cents per pound. The mine was closed as unprofitable. The little town of Holden was deeded to the Lutheran Church and became Holden Village, an interdenominational retreat. But the mine left behind 8 million tons of tailings, piled in three orange-streaked mounds that look like 100 acres of sand. The streaks are caused when sunlight hits the mixture of minerals and metals still in the piles — mostly iron with traces of zinc, copper and nickel. The minerals seep into Railroad Creek and other nearby waterways, killing the tiny creatures that provide the main source of food for rainbow and cutthroat trout. The once-thriving ecosystem is now considered part of a toxic site. A 1989 assessment of Lake Chelan commissioned by the state Department of Ecology said iron concentrations in Railroad Creek were considerably higher than those of other areas along the lake. It also suggested Railroad Creek contributed 80 percent of the zinc in Lake

Chelan. "These zinc levels may produce chronic and possibly even acute effects to aquatic life," the report concluded. U.S. Forest Service personnel say they've seen the results. "Railroad Creek contributes 15 percent of the water into Lake Chelan," said Chelan District Ranger Al Murphy, who is helping nurse the creek back to health. "So it would be reasonable that the creek should provide 15 percent of the fish habitat. But instead it's almost none." Initially, there were efforts to push some of the tailings back into the miles of mine shafts. But water pushed it back out again. In 1990, rocks were placed along the mile-long base of the tailings, where they meet the creek. This stopped the creek from undercutting the piles, but it didn't stop the leaching of minerals into the creek, Murphy said. In 1991, the tailings were covered with lime and 4 inches of gravel to hold down metal dust. Windblown dust had been so thick at times it wore away wooden fences and caused breathing problems for residents. But it wasn't a permanent solution, Murphy said. "We were very successful in dealing with the immediate threat of the air and water pollution from the dust," he said. "What we weren't able to correct with that project was the long-term threat of the leaching. That project was kind of a first-phase thing dealing with the physical stability of the tailings. Then came dealing with the chemical problem." Then the Forest Service started vegetation islands, placing heaps of soil on top of the gravel-covered piles. Acid-tolerant trees, grasses and shrubs were planted on the soil and directly on the gravel as officials tried to figure out what kinds of vegetation would stop the leaching.

'We don't care if the trees ever really grow — the idea is to get organic material back on site.'

— Al Murphy
Chelan District Ranger

So far, 35 species of vegetation have been tried, Murphy said. Experiments have shown that lupines don't stop the leaching. Alder bushes, blue bunch wheat grass and ponderosa pines do. "We're trying for bioremediation," he said. "The organic matter we plant here will 'lock up' with the metals and stop the flow into the creek. We don't care if the trees ever really grow — the idea is to get organic material back on site." Wells on each mound of tailings measure the water's chemical content and acidity. They show preliminary signs of recovery — evidence that the investment is paying off, Murphy said. So far, about \$4.5 million — mostly from Forest Service funds for toxic sites — has been invested in stabilizing the site. Murphy expects more money will be allocated now that there are some positive results. Negotiations are under way with Alumet, successor to Howe Sound Mining, which owned Holden Mine. Atlanta-based Alumet is being asked to reimburse taxpayers for the money spent so far, and to contribute to future reclamation costs. Under provisions of the Comprehensive Environmental Response Compensation and Liability Act, the federal government can require companies responsible for pollution to do some or all of the reclamation work. The company has acknowledged some responsibility for the tailings, Forest Service officials said. The project is still years from completion, said Sonny O'Neal, supervisor of the Wenatchee National Forest.

Seattle Times

August 3, 1997

NEWS UPDATE

Mountain Loop Highway Proposal Update

The years' long project to upgrade the Mountain Loop Scenic Byway has taken a new turn. As we all know by now, the stretch from Darrington to the Whitechuck River was paved to near-freeway standards several years ago. In the last few years, the Federal Highway Administration had money burning a hole in their pocket so they initiated a propaganda campaign to pave and relocate the remaining unpaved portion of the road from the Whitechuck River to Barlow Pass, even funding some of the watershed studies for the USFS. A round of meetings with the public indicated that an Environmental Impact Statement was necessary and that they be a partner with the Forest Service in accomplishing this EIS. Apparently, things have not worked out and the FHA is no longer a

partner in this endeavor. The USFS and Snohomish County plan to have some public scoping meetings in the future but nothing is definite at this writing.

An interested observer could speculate that the opposition from groups such as the NCCC and Pilchuck Audubon were enough to make them put this on the back burner for awhile. The political situation in Snohomish County looks much better since the September Primary election. Maybe we can breath easier on this one issue, at least for a while, but the FHA is notorious for its tenacity in wasting taxpayer money on unwanted road upgrades in our mountainous areas. We will continue to track this issue.

Perry Creek Watershed Now Research Natural Area

The Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest and USFS Northwest Regional

Office have recently decided to officially recognize the Perry Creek watershed as a Research Natural Area. The decision comes after a series of public input periods, scoping actions, etc. This decision, supported by the NCCC, places the area roughly upstream from the trailhead to the hydrographic boundaries into the RNA. A controversial trail around the head of the valley will not be included. An NCCC suggestion to also include the lower portion of Perry Creek down to the river was not accepted. The USFS is to be commended for this step. One of the alternatives would have been to adjust the boundaries of the RNA to allow a new horse/hiker trail to traverse the valley. It is now hoped that the existing trail, trailhead and other areas impacted by recreationists can be modified to mitigate the effects of human impact.

Membership Application

Be part of the North Cascades Conservation Council's Advocacy of the North Cascades. Join the NCCC. Support the North Cascades Foundation. Help us help protect North Cascades wilderness from overuse and development.

NCCC membership dues (one year): \$10 low income/student; \$20 regular; \$25 family; \$50 Contributing; \$100 patron; \$1,000 sustaining. A one-time life membership dues payment is \$500. *The Wild Cascades*, published three times a year, is included with NCCC membership.

Please check the appropriate box(es):

I wish membership in NCCC

The North Cascades Conservation Council (NCCC), formed in 1957, works through legislative, legal and public channels to protect the lands, waters, plants and wildlife of the North Cascades ecosystem. Non-tax-deductible, it is supported by dues and donations. A 501(c)4 organization.

I wish to support NCF

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

This is a NCCC Membership NCCC Renewal Membership Gift NCCC \$ _____

This is a Donation to NCF NCF \$ _____

Total \$ _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

Please cut, enclose check and mail form and check to:
NORTH CASCADES CONSERVATION COUNCIL
Membership Chair L. Zalesky
2433 Del Campo Drive ▲ Everett, WA 98208

The Mountaineers Offers N.W. Environmental Issues Course

The Mountaineers is offering a Northwest Environmental Issues Course to educate people about traditional Northwest issues while empowering them to take actions that will make a positive difference for the environment. Class sessions are taught by leading experts on the topics of forestry, salmon, water, wildlife, land use, energy and activism. A diverse series of field trips compliment the class sessions, applying issues to real-world experiences.

The eight-session course begins Monday, February 1, at 6:30 p.m. with keynote speaker University of Washington Professor Peter Ward. Sessions will run Mondays from 6:30 to 9 p.m. at The Mountaineers building, 300 3rd Ave. W. The course is accredited by Antioch University. The course is \$60 for members, \$70 for non-members. For more information, please contact Loren Foss or Matt Golec at 206-284-6310.

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