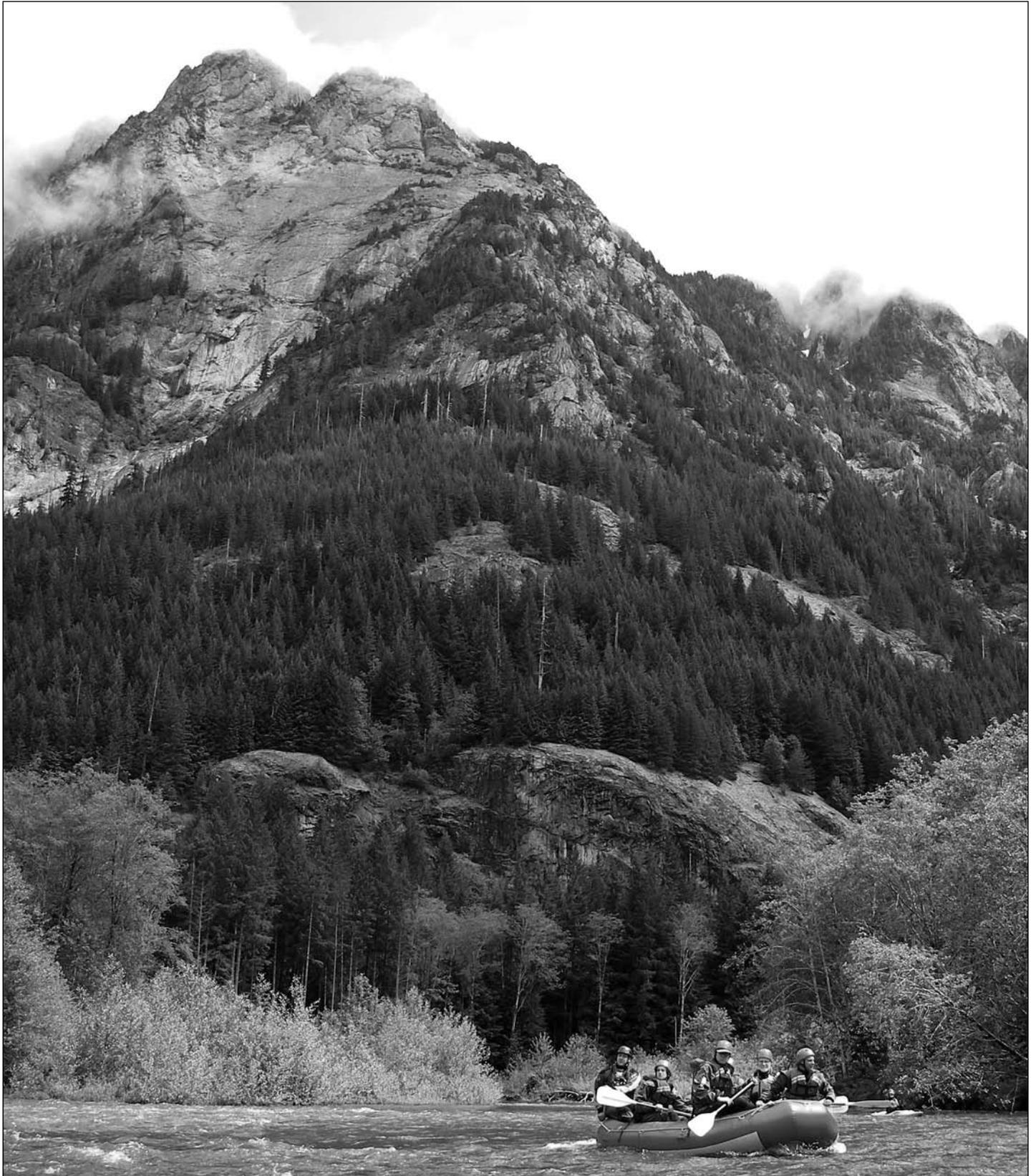


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# THE WILD CASCADES

THE JOURNAL OF THE NORTH CASCADES CONSERVATION COUNCIL    SUMMER/FALL 2009

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## THE WILD CASCADES ■ Summer/Fall 2009

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Cover: Rafting the Middle Fork Snoqualmie beneath Garfield Mountain.  
—PHOTO TOM O'KEEFE

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## The Wild Cascades

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*Journal of the North Cascades Conservation Council*

EDITOR: Betty Manning

EDITORIAL BOARD: John Edwards, Tom Hammond,  
Carolyn McConnell and Rick McGuire

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### THE NORTH CASCADES

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

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

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

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Founded in 1957  
SEATTLE, WASHINGTON

## The President's Report Summer/Fall 2009

Many of us might think that the idea of wilderness is a pretty straightforward concept — there are places with few motorized devices, there is little evidence of other people, and it usually takes a fair walk to get there. More correctly, this would only be true for so-called “deep wilderness”. Around the periphery, especially close to trailheads, wilderness is quite different and the land has often taken a beating. Despite efforts by government agencies, the result of too many enthusiastic users has been a hammering of the wilderness edge. A rough definition of “wilderness edge” is sometimes thought of as a day-hike distance from the end of the road.

The level of access, and the demand for more access, can place enormous stress on the edges of our wilderness areas. Many folks demand that a road be available to make access to their traditional wilderness area be easy or at least as easy as it has been in the past. The North Cascades Conservation Council is sometimes criticized for taking a principled stand on criteria for road projects. We devote a lot of effort to analyzing road construction, decommissioning, maintenance, and re-openings. The point is, roads are a major factor in dictating protection and establishment of new, existing, and de-facto wilderness.

As conservationists, we need to multi-task our efforts to preserve wilderness. First, we need to continue efforts to convert as much roadless area as possible to protected status or de-facto wilderness. Second, we need to be the champions for using details of the wilderness act to maintain the land as intended. Third, and no less important, we need to campaign vigorously for facilities to encourage day-hiking opportunities that meet the desires of recreationists who only need short-term experiences. These will be the majority of people and their trips. The new facilities should include more trails to interesting areas with low environmental impact and served by adequate parking and other amenities. Great examples of this concept of channeling folks into areas close to urban areas and in less sensitive areas would be the network of trails in the Issaquah Alps and around North Bend. This approach needs to be expanded into the Mountain Loop area. The goal should be to protect wilderness and at the same time, encourage as many people as possible to enjoy nature and the outdoors. Proposals for more wilderness or road closures must be accompanied by plans for increasing the number of day-hiking opportunities rather than reducing them.

# Whitechuck Update

The Forest Service has released an Environmental Assessment for rebuilding the Whitechuck River road in the Darrington Ranger District. Readers may remember previous articles in TWC describing the effects of the major 2003 washouts, which totally erased substantial sections of the road, especially its lower reaches. The Whitechuck valley has been a conservation priority ever since the Everett Mountaineers attempted unsuccessfully to spare the valley from the railroad logging which began in its lower reaches in 1927. The road should not be rebuilt, but instead converted to multiuse non-motorized trail.

About ten miles of road were rendered inaccessible to vehicles by the washouts. In selecting their preferred alternative, the Forest Service has cut the proverbial baby in half by deciding to rebuild the lower five miles of road where the most damage is, and closing the road above the junction with the Rat Trap Pass road. The miles of road would be left with "walkable tread," but not designated as trail.

Having fully expected the Forest Service to want to rebuild the entire road, the recommendation to not rebuild the upper five miles has come as a mildly pleasant surprise. The EA cites a number of reasons for not rebuilding, reasons which basically boil down to the fact that the unstable geology of the Whitechuck valley means that any road there is a temporary road. However, all the reasons cited for not rebuilding the upper five miles apply just as much or more to the lower five miles, where the greatest damage is.

Just what would be gained from rebuilding the lower road is unclear. Part of it may be a desire to hold on to the crumbling Rat Trap Pass road, itself damaged in numerous spots, and a desire to keep it as a vehicular route between the Whitechuck and Suiattle valleys. Doing so would require rebuilding the Boundary Bridge



*Change is the only constant in the Whitechuck valley.*

across the Suiattle River at its other end. Rebuilding that bridge presents a host of problems and it is unclear at the moment what will happen there.

The enormous amount of filling required to rebuild the lower road as proposed by the Forest Service would damage the Whitechuck River and its fisheries, and violate the Aquatic Conservation Strategy of the Northwest Forest Plan. And if rebuilt, the road will fail again, probably sooner rather than later.

Although the Forest Service proposal



*Whitechuck River eats road on lower Whitechuck.*

*The Forest Service proposes to fill it back in. —PHOTOS KEVIN GERAGHTY*

to stop rebuilding the upper five miles of road is a welcome recognition of the futility of keeping a road open in the Whitechuck, NCCC wonders why the Forest Service applies this reasoning only to those upper five miles. No substantive reasons are given as to why the lower road should be treated differently. Perhaps it is just institutional reluctance to give up on a major valley bottom road.

It is time to finish what was first attempted in 1927 and time to put the Whitechuck road to bed. In its comments on the EA,

NCCC praised the Forest Service for recognizing the futility of rebuilding the upper road but asked why the same reasoning did not apply to the lower road. Hopefully the Forest Service will ask itself the same question before pouring taxpayers' dollars into what would be an unnecessary, damaging and very temporary rebuild of the lower Whitechuck road.

# Stehekin Update

Disturbing news has come from the U.S. House of Representatives in the form of H.R. 2806, a bill introduced by Congressman Doc Hastings (R-4th district) to move the boundaries of the Stephen Mather Wilderness to allow rebuilding of the upper Stehekin River road. As this issue of *The Wild Cascades* goes to press, Hastings, who is the ranking minority member on the House Energy and Natural Resources Committee, has managed to get the bill through both the relevant subcommittee and the full committee, and is expected to try getting it through the full House.

Wild Cascades readers will remember that NCCC has lobbied for years to close back the upper Stehekin road, which has washed out innumerable times. The Park Service has recognized the futility of trying to keep a road open in the flood prone upper Stehekin valley, and decided against spending yet more taxpayer dollars on yet another rebuild of this road. Hastings wants Congress to overturn the Park Service's decision and force the agency to fix the road again. NCCC and several other conservation organizations submitted testimony against the bill.

The Stehekin road connects to no other road, and can be accessed only by those few vehicles which have been expensively barged up Lake Chelan. It has now been washed out by floods or closed by slides so many times that locals can no longer remember how many times it has happened. Any future repair of the upper road would be guaranteed to fail again, probably sooner rather than later.

In the wider world outside Stehekin, there are all manner of failing roads and bridges located in places where people actually live. Something like one quarter of all bridges in the United States are now beyond their life expectancy. Any taxpayer's dollars spent to allow the handful of vehicles in the Stehekin valley to travel the upper road again are dollars not spent on these real and urgent needs where lives may be at stake.

Hastings' status as ranking member may explain why his bill has gone as far as it has. It is alarming to see that a Wilderness boundary might be so casually changed to allow a seldom used "road to nowhere" to be rebuilt. Should it pass the House, action will move to the Senate where NCCC and its allies hope to persuade Washington's two senators that pouring more money into another temporary repair of the upper Stehekin road is a very bad idea.

# NCCC Intervenes in Sultan Hydro Relicensing

NCCC, along with sister organizations Pilchuck Audubon Society and Alpine Lakes Protection Society, has filed a motion to intervene in the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) proceedings regarding Snohomish PUD's application for a new license to operate the Jackson hydroelectric project on the Sultan river in eastern Snohomish county.

Previous issues of *The Wild Cascades* have covered the problems caused by the PUD's lack of proper mitigation for this project and the lands flooded by it. The PUD has acquired some areas of old-growth forest in the Sultan area, but these are at risk from "snag creation" and other "improvement" measures. Most of the so-called mitigation lands for the project are commercial forests managed on 60-year rotation, indistinguishable from any other

industrial timberland. The PUD touts the value of deer forage from these lands, something of which there is no shortage in heavily logged eastern Snohomish county. Other PUD lands are at risk from thinning and other "enhancement" logging. The Snohomish PUD can and ought to do much better than it has to date.

Instead, the PUD is proposing to do less rather than more mitigation during a second 50-year license period for the project. With very deep pockets, and a proven track record of spending whatever it takes on lawyers and consultants in order to avoid spending on mitigation, it will be an uphill battle to get the PUD to do better. By intervening, the groups hope to convince FERC to require more substantive mitigation from the Snohomish utility.

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## Evergreen Mountain Stimulus Money Fuels Forest Road Folly

A small but substantial portion of freshly printed federal economic stimulus monies have filtered down locally to the Forest Service. Like manna from heaven, these funds are being used to pay for all kinds of projects on the national forests, a few good, some not so good, and some, in NCCC's opinion, very bad.

One of the worst local examples is the Evergreen Mountain road in the Beckler River watershed of the Skykomish Ranger District of the Mt. Baker Snoqualmie National Forest. Originally built on the cheap in the 1970s to allow logging of marginal high-elevation timber, the Evergreen Mountain road is a perfect example of a road that never should have been built. From the vicinity of Jack Pass it winds up and across 9 miles of steep, precarious and unstable slopes, climbing to the 4200-foot level, providing access to a short remnant of trail leading to an old lookout atop Evergreen Mountain.

So many times has the Evergreen Mountain road washed out that no one can remember how many times it has happened. Collapses have come routinely after almost every major late fall storm since it was first constructed. Some of the more recent rebuilds have been heralded as "stormproofings," supposedly rendering it invulnerable to whatever the elements might throw at it. But they apparently forgot to tell Mother Nature; each "stormproofing" has lasted exactly until the next

storm. And now, displaying a willingness to keep repeating the same mistakes that would seem astonishing anywhere else, but is all too familiar from the Forest Service, it is being rebuilt yet again, thanks to stimulus money. It is unclear at this writing whether this latest effort is another "stormproofing."

Benjamin Franklin (some say Albert Einstein), once supposedly said that insanity is doing the same thing over and over again expecting different results. Looked at from a bureaucratic budgetary perspective, perhaps this is an example of that; but perhaps not.

The economist John Maynard Keynes once theorized that government spending for economic stimulus need not be on anything productive, and could even involve digging ditches and filling them in again, or building the equivalent of pyramids and then tearing them down. Perhaps the Evergreen Mountain road has become a textbook example of non-productive, make-work public stimulus spending. Guaranteed to soon be destroyed again, it will continue to provide opportunities for further rebuilding, perhaps indefinitely ... or at least as long as the printing presses in the other Washington still produce anything of value.

One can't help but wonder what kind of productive investments might have been made instead.

# Your Chance to Help Recover Wolves in Washington State

Jim Davis

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) has passed another milestone in their effort to develop a Washington Wolf Conservation and Management Plan that will guide wolf recovery in Washington State. This past spring and summer WDFW circulated a draft of the plan to wildlife biologists and wolf program managers at the federal, state, tribal, and university levels. With comments from more than 40 respondents, WDFW produced yet another draft of the plan that will be circulated for public review and comment this fall.

Unfortunately, WDFW did not pay attention to multiple comments presenting evidence that the conservation goals in the draft plan are not based on adequate science. WDFW has retained the biased conservation goals from earlier drafts of the plan. If the draft plan is adopted by the Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission, wolves will be reclassified from endangered to threatened when six breeding pairs are documented across the whole state; reclassified from threatened to sensitive when 12 breeding pairs are documented; and delisted entirely when 15 breeding pairs are documented. After delisting, wolves in Washington could be designated as big game animals and hunted, as we are now seeing in both Idaho and Montana.

## Why Is Wolf Conservation Planning in Washington an Important Issue?

Primary responsibility for the recovery of wolves resides at the federal level, with the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) developing and implementing conservation plans. The Northern Rocky Mountain wolf recovery area includes Idaho, Wyoming, Montana, and eastern portions of Washington and Oregon. Although wolves have been documented in western Washington and Oregon, they are not included in a defined recovery area.

The USFWS has recently ruled that the Idaho and Montana wolf populations are fully recovered. Wolves in these two states have been delisted and are no longer protected at the federal level. This delisting decision is being challenged by the De-



www.all-about-wolves.com

## What Does the Science Say?

Conservation goals for wolves must be set at sufficient numbers of individuals to ensure that a permanently viable wolf population is reestablished. A viable wolf population must be able to survive fluctuations in abundance associated with prey availability, disease, and habitat quality. A viable population must include sufficient numbers of individuals to maintain genetic diversity and avoid inbreeding. Long-term survival also depends on the level of conflict with livestock producers and hunters.

A wolf population (i.e., meta-population) can be comprised of several smaller sub-populations in distinct geographic areas that are linked through wolf dispersal and consequent gene flow. Meta-populations can occur at the regional, state, or local level. The amount of gene flow between populations depends on the extent of barriers to dispersal.

However, the situation is even more complex than this. Wolf dispersal and connectivity between populations also depends on the level of wolf habitat saturation in a defined geographic area. Wolf behavior studies have shown that significant long distance dispersal to other geographic areas is likely to occur only if the local prey base is fully exploited and/or other habitat features become limiting.

Unfortunately, wolf population biology is not a well-developed or exact science, leaving much room for political mischief. In 1994, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's assessment of a self-sustaining population of wolves in the Northern Rocky Mountains concluded that "Thirty or more breeding pairs comprising some 300+ wolves in a meta-population (a population that exists as partially isolated sets of subpopulations) with genetic exchange between subpopulations should have a high probability of long-term persistence because such a population would contain enough individuals in successfully reproducing packs distributed over distinct but somewhat connected large areas to be viable for the long-term. A population at

fenders of Wildlife and other conservation groups based on inadequate science in the decision-making process. Wolves remain listed under the federal endangered species law in Wyoming, western Washington and western Oregon.

When federal conservation goals are achieved and a species is delisted at the federal level, responsibility for recovery and long-term population maintenance is shifted to states that have developed conservation plans approved by USFWS. An endangered species may be delisted at the federal level, but still retain endangered species protection at the state level. For better or worse, state agencies often follow the science and management prescriptions developed at the federal level when they are developing endangered species conservation plans at the state level.

Unfortunately, endangered species recovery (especially for wolves and other predators) is often very controversial. Depending on broader political conditions at the time of federal or state recovery plan development, the plan can be dramatically biased. This does not bode well for long-term recovery of a species like the gray wolf. As described below, the USFWS did not take into account wolf population biology in their plan development and delisting decision on the Idaho and Montana wolf populations. As a progressive state, Washington must rise above political considerations and develop a wolf conservation plan that that really achieves the letter and spirit of endangered species laws.

*Continued on page 7*

## Washington State Wolves

*continued from page 6*

or above this size would contain at least 30 successfully reproducing packs and ample individuals to ensure long-term population viability. In addition, the meta-population configuration and distribution throughout secure suitable habitat would ensure that each core recovery area would include a recovered population distributed over a large enough area to provide resilience to natural or human-caused events that may temporarily affect one core recovery area.”

This conclusion is not accepted by many wolf biologists. Research has shown that a minimum viable wolf population is much larger than the 30 breeding pairs already adopted for the Northern Rocky Mountain wolf recovery area. It is certainly larger than the “15 breeding pairs” conservation goal being contemplated for Washington State. Rules of thumb developed from research studies indicate a genetically effective population size of 50 breeding pairs (or about 500 individual wolves) prevents unacceptable inbreeding and short-term loss of viability. A population size of 500 breeding pairs (or about 5,000 individual wolves) ensures overall long-term genetic variability. Dr. David Reed at the University of Mississippi has estimated a minimum viable population for wolves as 6,332 individuals.

Even if one accepts the 30 breeding pair conservation goal for the North Rocky Mountain wolf population, successful recovery requires continued genetically effective dispersal among the relatively isolated wolf populations within the Northern Rocky Mountain states (i.e., Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming) and across the border into Canada. Recent studies have shown that such dispersal is difficult to achieve until high local wolf population levels saturate existing habitats (even higher population levels than currently seen in Idaho and at the Yellowstone National Park) and prompt wolves to disperse over long distances to find adequate prey and new habitat in other areas. Natural connectivity between the Yellowstone and other wolf populations is not even expected by biologists. Under the current plan for Northern Rocky Mountain wolves, dispersal will be “facilitated” through capturing and moving wolves.

The bottom line: there is significant disagreement at the federal level (as well as the state level) on how to apply existing scientific knowledge to wolf conservation. Further, there are major gaps in this scientific knowledge (especially at the Washington State level) that must be filled before a viable state wolf conservation plan can be developed in Washington.

## So, What Do We Do Now?

At present, the number of wolves necessary for ensuring the recovery of Washington State’s population is almost impossible to determine. Our best guesstimate is somewhere around 50 breeding pairs, but that is highly uncertain. Washington must wait until scientific consensus is achieved at the national level before even considering conservation goals for wolf recovery at the state level.

However, developing consensus guidelines at the federal level for determining minimum viable wolf populations is only the first step. Substantial state-specific information on wolves will be needed to apply these guidelines effectively. Information is lacking for Washington on wolf pack sizes and predator-prey relationships. Rates of dispersal and estimates of connectivity between Washington and adjoining states/provinces are currently unknown. This information will be essential to determine whether wolves in Washington are part of a sub-population or must survive as a stand-alone meta-population. Connectivity between fragmented wolf habitats within Washington State is even more poorly understood. Only limited information is available for determining wolf carrying capacities in geographic areas of the state (e.g., North Cascades).

Additional research is needed to establish scientifically based conservation goals for Washington State wolves. Instead of prematurely setting conservation goals based on misguided federal precedent or local political considerations (i.e., the rancher-dominated stakeholder process being used to develop the Washington wolf plan), WDFW should work with research institutions to collect information on wolf biology, habitat connectivity, and carrying capacity that is relevant to Washington State wolves.

Anything less is a travesty. We can do better in Washington.

## What Can You Do to Make It Happen?

WDFW is conducting a 90-day public review process starting September 29th that will allow concerned citizens to comment on the current draft of the Washington

Wolf Conservation and Management Plan. Everyone who is concerned about wolf recovery in Washington State should speak up during this comment period. Gray wolves need your help NOW!

You can comment to WDFW via postal mail (600 Capitol Way N., Olympia, WA 98501-1091) or the WDFW website ([http://wdfw.wa.gov/wlm/diversty/soc/gray\\_wolf/index.htm](http://wdfw.wa.gov/wlm/diversty/soc/gray_wolf/index.htm)). Even better, you can attend one of the public hearings (see below) that WDFW is coordinating around the state.

The wolf conservation community in Washington State has developed comments on the wolf plan that should be communicated to WDFW. These include the following. Please also add your own personal comments.

- Support a focused, rigorous, and transparent scientific review of the conservation goals included in the Wolf Conservation and Management Plan.
- Reject arbitrary goals (e.g., 15 breeding pairs) in favor of scientifically based goals that account for factors such as illegal poaching, genetic isolation, disease, and other potential mortality events.
- Ensure that delisting is not considered until genetic diversity, genetic connectivity, and genetically viable population goals have been met for at least five years.
- Implement the moving or translocation of wolves to appropriate wilderness habitat within the state.
- Emphasize non-lethal techniques for management, such as the use of guard animals and predator deterrent fencing.
- Invest in programs that educate Washington citizens about wolf ecology, including the fact that they are native to our great state and play a beneficial role overall in our ecosystem.

Wolf conservation in Washington State will not be fully resolved during this one short comment period. If you would like to continue your support for wolf recovery in Washington, please send your name and email address for inclusion in our wildlife action network ([jimdavis@northcascades.org](mailto:jimdavis@northcascades.org)).

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### WDFW public hearings, all from 6:30 to 9:00 p.m.

- Oct. 20 Clarkston - Walla Walla Community College Lecture Hall (1470 Bridge St.)
  - Oct. 21 Richland - Pacific NW National Laboratory Auditorium (904 Battelle Blvd.)
  - Oct. 22 Yakima - Red Lion Hotel, Yakima Center (607 E. Yakima Ave.)
  - Oct. 26 Colville - N.E. WA Fairgrounds Ag-Trade Center (317 West Astor Ave.)
  - Oct. 27 Spokane - Spokane Valley Center Place (4246 N. Discovery Place)
  - Oct. 28 Vancouver - Water Resources Education Center (4600 SE Columbia Way)
  - Oct. 29 Aberdeen - Rotary Log Pavilion (E. of Aberdeen at 1401 Sargent Blvd.)
  - Nov. 2 Seattle - REI Seattle Flagship Store (222 Yale Ave. N.)
  - Nov. 4 Mt. Vernon - Cottontree Inn Convention Center (2300 Market St.)
  - Nov. 5 Sequim - Guy Cole Convention Center, Carrie Blake Park (212 Blake Ave.)
  - Nov. 9 Omak - Okanogan County Fairgrounds Agriplex (Hwy. 97 South)
  - Nov. 10 Wenatchee - Chelan County PUD Auditorium (327 N. Wenatchee Ave.)
-

# Feds Review Mountain-dwelling Pika for Threatened-species List

Seattle Times - August 21, 2009

By Lynda V. Mapes, Seattle Times staff reporter

EASY PASS, North Cascades National Park — Pikas don't ask much. With brave squeaks, belted out from atop their rock piles, they defend their realm in the talus slopes way up here in the mountains, more than a mile in the sky, far from anyone, anywhere.

Yet even in their remote realm, the small, furry pika, a close relative of the rabbit, may be affected by humans.

Some wildlife advocates warn that pikas, with their preference for the cool, lofty high country, are at risk of extinction throughout the West by the end of the century as the climate warms. They have sued the feds to determine whether the animal should be listed for protection under the Endangered Species Act.

But others say losses of some local populations don't spell extinction risk for an animal still abundant in many places.

A decision is due from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service by February.

Meanwhile, in a separate effort, scientists are studying pika populations at North Cascades National Park, in a first-ever, one-year pilot study funded by Seattle City Light, which tracks habitat in the North Cascades, where it operates hydroelectric dams. The study is intended to build a baseline of data about where pika are presently found.

"Climate change is the biggest issue facing our national parks," said Chip Jenkins, park superintendent. "Scientists have determined that our climate is changing, and it is changing rapidly. What we are doing is looking for key indicators, key species that are likely to be the ones that show the first response to climate change."

To many scientists, pikas are a perfect study candidate because they are sensitive to temperature. They can be killed by temperatures higher than 78 degrees Fahrenheit, and prefer the rugged, rocky habitat found typically, but not exclusively, at higher elevations.

*Ochotona princeps* spend their summers gathering and stowing vegetation in great haypiles in their homes in the crevices between rocks. There are 36 recognized American pika subspecies in North America, 31 of which live in islands

of unconnected habitat flung across nine of the western United States, including Washington and Oregon.

The pikas' signature call is a one-note squeak, blurted out to sound an alert, or defend their territory. Sweet-faced, with round ears and egg-shaped, furry bodies, pikas have cute down cold.

Adapting to a warming world could be a challenge for the pika, however. Erik

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*Could the call of the pika, that signature sound of the wild high country, be silenced by global warming? The feds are studying whether pikas should be listed as a threatened species.*

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Bever of the U.S. Geological Survey has found seven of 25 populations of pika reported earlier in the 20th century in the Great Basin appear to be lost. He thinks climate is the primary driver.

Shaye Wolf of the Center for Biological Diversity, headquartered in San Francisco, which sued to force the feds to consider listing, links population losses with climate change, and fears more to come.

"The loss of pika really shows that climate is impacting wildlife in our own backyard," Wolf said. "It's happening right now; it is not a distance problem for our grandchildren to worry about."

But other scientists caution that while pika are an excellent indicator species to study, localized losses don't mean the animals are doomed.

"It is not a question of them running off the tops of summits until there is no more space," said Connie Millar, a senior research scientist for the U.S. Forest Service, based in Albany, Calif. Pika have turned up in abundance in her own surveys in the East Sierra, south of Lake Tahoe. "I don't see any evidence of their decline in this

region," Millar said.

In the advocates' claim for listing, Andrew Smith of Arizona State University sees a case of going overboard, and extending implications from limited studies.

In his own work in Bodie, Calif., begun in 1969, Smith said he found pika capable of adapting to temperature swings by haying at night, instead of during the day, if it is too warm. He also has found the animals at low elevations, where they were not documented previously, complicating the theory that pikas are being chased relentlessly up slope.

"We really think pikas are at risk, and we should learn more about them, and be monitoring them at lower elevations," Smith said. "They should tell us an incredible amount about climate change. But they are not endangered."

Jason Bruggeman of Beartooth Wildlife Research in Farmington, Minn., is the researcher leading the study of pika populations at North Cascades National Park. So far this summer, he's investigated pika populations in 17 areas and found pika in 14 of them. "They definitely are widely distributed," Bruggeman said. His survey work will continue into September.

The population survey is intended to help the park build an ongoing inventory of the park's vital signs, including a review of the status of land birds, subalpine vegetation, mountain lake ecology, amphibian populations, and more.

Jenkins, the park superintendent, says pika matter. "They are the icon of the wild high country.

"It's pretty cool that any kid could come up to the Cascades now and go to Easy Pass, or Cascade Pass, and they will hear that screech, and see that animal, just as people have for the last 100 years. What if we lost that? What happens if my kids' kids don't get to hear or see that? We lose something important, we lose a symbol of the park, of the wild Cascades."

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[http://seattletimes.nwsources.com/html/localnews/200902923\\_pika21m.html](http://seattletimes.nwsources.com/html/localnews/200902923_pika21m.html)

# Hiker Helps Turn Dumping Ground into Scenic Gem

*Seattle Times* - Saturday, Sept. 5, 2009  
By Lynda V. Mapes, *Seattle Times* staff reporter

*For Seattle resident Mark Boyar, polishing the Middle Fork of the Snoqualmie River to a recreational jewel has been a labor of love.*

As the river swirls around the rock where he is perched, Mark Boyar looks perfectly at home.

After more than two decades working to polish this recreational jewel, for Boyar the valley along the Middle Fork of the Snoqualmie River has become his second home, even a member of his family.

"It really is my oldest child," he said.

Some 22,000 acres of this lowland river valley, with the Pratt and the Middle Fork of the Snoqualmie rivers running through, are proposed for permanent protection by Congress. The forest would be added to the existing Alpine Lakes Wilderness Area, created in 1976, and the two rivers would gain protection from dams or other development under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act.

And if there's any one person who has helped get the valley the national attention many believe it deserves, it's Boyar, the Man of the Middle Fork.

"I would call him the godfather. He has always been the one who has carried the ball. The Middle Fork never would have gotten to the place where it is without him," said Wade Holden of Friends of the Trail, a nonprofit cleanup business based near North Bend. Holden spent years hauling trash out of the Middle Fork Valley, a legacy of decades of illegal dumping.

"It is such a gorgeous area, and it had been just hammered for so many years; you wouldn't believe the knot-headed activity that went on up there," Holden said. Dead washing machines riddled with bullet holes, junked cars, trash by the ton, illegal shooting, a meth lab — portions of the Mid Fork Valley have seen it all.

Rick McGuire of the Alpine Lakes Protection Society, a nonprofit conservation group, met Boyar in the 1990s when the two were taking turns with other volunteers camping out for about a month by pieces of a wooden bridge to be built across the Middle Fork.

Before construction got under way, they had to keep watch on the pieces to make



*Mark Boyar up on the Garfield Ledges above the Middle Fork of the Snoqualmie River, Wash.*

—THOMAS O'KEEFE

the wild ones and turn the Middle Fork around," Boyar said.

After two summers spent putting up the Middle Fork bridge over the river, "we realized we needed to take the whole valley back," he said. "We needed a much-broader

effort."

Working with the Mountains to Sound Greenway, Boyar and others put together a management plan for the area, including restrooms, a new campground and an improved access road.

The feds, the state Department of Natural Resources and King County all got involved, aided by a wide range of players, from local timber companies to backcountry horsemen, mountain bikers, whitewater rafters, hikers, native-plant aficionados, even the local rifle club.

Today the Mid Fork is the land of the station wagon, of little kids fishing with their families along the river.

It's a place Boyar enjoys as much as anyone, with two kids of his own, ages 7 and 12.

"There aren't many places where you can bike with the kids and do day hikes off the side roads," said Boyar, who is spending his family's summer vacation doing exactly that. He also enjoys bushwhacks way off the trails with his buddies, often by the light of the moon.

He savors the pleasures of knowing one place well: learning when the native bleeding hearts are in bloom; when the salmon berries are fat; where the hummingbirds are abuzz and the cottonwood buds have just broken, perfuming the air in spring. "It's so gentle," he said of this lowland forest. "And so quiet."

"Every time I turn a corner, I am stunned all over again; there is nothing else like it," Boyar said on a recent morning as he walked along the Middle Fork.

Wilderness designation, he said, would be a capstone for the more than 20 years of effort to protect and preserve this valley. "It's stewardship, for the long term," Boyar said. "And it's recognition, too, of the national significance of this treasure."

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sure hooligans didn't steal or burn them. McGuire fondly remembers the fellowship through the long, rainy days and nights of the stakeout — and the dedication he grew to know in Boyar.

"He has kept his focus," McGuire said. "Some people start to work in one place, then work in another. He has not spread himself too thin or burned out — he has specialized on the Middle Fork. It is in his DNA.

"A lot of people have been involved, some more than others, but he has been the glue that has kept it all together, the sun around which everyone has revolved."

Boyar, 52, a Stanford grad in political science and former product manager for 24 years with a medical-software company, figures he has probably put 10 to 20 volunteer hours a week into the Middle Fork since 1991.

"It's a place where I thought I could make a difference," said Boyar, 52. "It was small enough I could get to know it and work hard at it. The more I came here, the more I learned, and after all those years it's very personal."

He said his love affair with the Middle Fork developed gradually. He started out hiking in the Olympics and North Cascades but wanted to try someplace closer to his home in Seattle, and the Middle Fork Valley is only about an hour from downtown.

"I heard about this valley," Boyer said "It was pretty clear, though, the place was a bit of a mess. It was a forest valley next to an urban valley, and the wild ones had moved in. Yet it could have been a national park if it was anywhere else in the country."

The first step in the rehab effort involved closing off the stub-end roads to the river to shut down illegal dumping. Then came the cleanup of trash, and a methodical transformation of the place, acre by acre. "The idea was, you would get the lawful use going, and that would drive out

# Good News, and a Wonderful Day on the Middle Fork

Good news has come to the Middle Fork Snoqualmie valley in the form of legislation, introduced in both houses of Congress by Senator Patty Murray and Eighth District Republican Congressman Dave Reichert, to add the low-elevation Pratt River valley and nearby areas to the Alpine Lakes Wilderness.

Although the effort would, if successful, add only 22,000 acres to the current 383,000 acres of the Alpine Lakes Wilderness, the old real estate adage of “location, location, location” very much applies here. Low-elevation lands are snow free for much of the year, support more species and are more biologically productive than higher elevations. It’s precisely because they are so valuable as timberland that they were excluded from most existing protected areas, including the Alpine Lakes Wilderness. Indeed, the Alpine Lakes Wilderness has sometimes been referred to as a “starfish,” or “octopus,” with protection extending out along high ridges and the intervening valleys excluded. The Pratt valley is perhaps the prime example of this.

Most of the lands in the Murray/Reichert bills are below 3000 feet, with some of the acreage in the lower Pratt valley and nearby areas in the Middle Fork valley reaching down to less than 900 feet in elevation. The centerpiece is of course the Pratt River valley. Partially RR logged in the 1930s, the Pratt has extensive mature, naturally regenerated second-growth forest, well on its way to becoming old growth. It also has plenty of true old-growth forest, and a high concentration of wildlife in its lower reaches during winter and spring months. Parts of the lower valley are so heavily browsed by elk that the forests are open and brush free, reminiscent of what one sees in west-side Olympic rainforest valleys.

Essentially all of the valleys which have so far been preserved in the Cascades are either far back into the snowy, mountainous interior of the range, or narrow and canyon-like, or both. The Pratt is neither. It is a big, broad valley, and its location at the very western edge of the Cascades gives it a true lowland climate. It really is “prime

real estate,” and conservationists have long sought to add it to the Alpine Lakes Wilderness.

But the good news on the Middle Fork isn’t limited to federal lands. Much of the lower valley downstream from just below the Pratt is state land managed by the Washington State Department of Natural Resources. Having just completed the transfer of almost all its lands on the northwest side of the Middle Fork into the Mount Si NRCA (Natural Resource Conservation Area,) the DNR is now moving to transfer most of the lands on the southeast side of the Middle Fork into a new Middle



*Senator Patty Murray and Congressman Dave Reichert announce introduction of legislation to enlarge the Alpine Lakes Wilderness and designate the Middle Fork Snoqualmie as a Wild and Scenic River, April 2008.*

—PHOTO TOM O’KEEFE

Fork Snoqualmie NRCA. If successful, this will, combined with wilderness for the Pratt, establish a large area of protected lowlands and cap twenty years of conservation work in the Middle Fork valley.

The lower Pratt valley and the DNR lands along the Middle Fork downstream from the Pratt are nothing short of marvelous. Averaging 800 or so feet in elevation, they are about as close to primeval lowlands as anything that can be found near Seattle, or anywhere in the Cascades for that matter. Recently longtime Middle Fork advocate Mark Boyar and I spent a day checking out part of this wild stretch of nearby country.

We began by walking down what was once a side road from the Middle Fork road leading to a former drive-in party

spot along the river bars opposite from the Pratt valley. This spur road, along with all others in the Middle Fork valley, was closed off by the Forest Service and Washington State Department of Natural Resources after intense public pressure. Once rutted, muddy and garbage strewn, several years without vehicles have transformed it into a pleasant walk. A two- or three-minute stroll through alder and cottonwood brings one out on to the expansive bars along the Middle Fork. Places like this that once saw drunken shooting parties on a regular basis are now attractive walk-in destinations. This particular river

bar once boasted an impromptu chop shop operated by Russian car thieves. With Russian Butte looming above, one wonders if they knew its name, and if so, whether they appreciated the irony. We’ll never know. But we do know beyond any doubt that closing spur roads like the one we walked down that day and cutting off vehicular access to places like the Pratt bar has done more than anything else to transform the once lawless Middle Fork valley.

Once out on the river bar, it was time for us to wade the Middle Fork, not a difficult proposition from mid-summer until the autumn rains come. But even at low water it’s still a river where it pays to seek out the broadest sections, and even there it can be deeper than it looks. Few people make the effort, and almost all of those are interested in fishing more than hiking, making the far side of the

Middle Fork delightfully deserted. Even though it is not far from the road across the river, it feels as though you wouldn’t see another person from one year to the next.

Across the Middle Fork a short walk down the river bar brought us to the much smaller Pratt. Crossing it, we both commented on how the Pratt smelled noticeably different from the Middle Fork. Just how different it would be difficult to explain, but perhaps fish have the specialized vocabulary to describe such things. It seemed surprising that we should notice such subtleties so soon after getting out of a car.

South of the Pratt, we climbed a low bank and entered a forest of tall evergreens covering its extensive delta. The



*Backwater slough in the Middle Fork Snoqualmie valley.*

—PHOTO  
KEVIN GERAGHTY

barely discernable route of the logging railroad, which once accessed the Pratt, was the only sign of humankind. When this area was logged during the Depression years only the very best trees were valuable enough to justify the labor of cutting and hauling them out. Only Douglas fir and the occasional cedar were seen as worth the effort. Hemlock, spruce, maple and many old cedars were left uncut. The result today is a splendid old forest that goes on for miles. While not technically “old growth,” it is certainly impressive. The high level of elk browsing keeps it relatively open, a joy to wander through. We moved down-valley, and spores from countless sword ferns covered us in reddish brown powder as we walked beneath the spreading, moss-covered limbs of huge bigleaf maples.

A number of old river channels and beaver-dammed wetlands added to the variety. A nest of noisy ospreys topped a tall spruce along one old slough. Everywhere there was wildlife sign. Some floodplain areas with big old cottonwoods had been fertilized with two or three inches of silt during the last flood. Areas of clay soils showed evidence of recent movement, toppling trees and opening up the canopy to allow growth of forage plants. There were also areas where soil movement down gullies left fresh deposits colonized by grasses and forbs, providing yet more food for wildlife. It was good to see occasional hazelnut, crabapple and bitter cherry trees, lowland species not found in the mountains.

The far, trailless side of the Middle Fork is remarkable for being that rarest of places, a truly wild lowland. There will always be plenty of wild mountains, but there are very few places like this reach of the Middle Fork. Other places in eastern King and Snohomish counties rivaled it until relatively recent times, but “second wave” logging has now swept through all

of them. The Middle Fork is the only place of its kind now left anywhere near Seattle.

It felt like we could continue wandering for miles through these lovely forests, but eventually the lowering sun prompted us to wade back across the river and head

back toward where we started. We skirted yet another large area of what looked to be very impressive floodplain forest growing between the river and the Middle Fork road, saving the exploration of it for another day. As we walked up river bars back toward the Pratt, Mark noticed some old worn-down pilings barely projecting above the riverbed. Then we spotted two other clusters. So here it was, the site of the RR trestle that led to the Pratt. Lucky for us that in less than eighty years almost all of the logging evidence has been erased, and something approaching cathedral forest has been able to regroup even in the once heavily logged areas. The changes, mostly positive, we have seen over several decades in the Middle Fork gave us something to ponder as we returned to the car.

It’s not an overstatement to say that the combination of wilderness for the national forest lands in and near the Pratt, and NRCA for the state lands downstream

along the Middle Fork will, if successful, protect a stretch of wild lowlands unrivalled in the Cascades. As DNR’s Doug McClelland has put it: “many years ago, Harvey Manning thought up the idea of ‘Wilderness on the Metro’ for Tiger Mountain. Tiger today is a wonderful recreational forest, but it ain’t wilderness. But on the Middle Fork we’ll have the real deal, the real Wilderness on the Metro.” Let’s hope it turns out that way.

—Rick McGuire



*Looking up Middle Fork Snoqualmie valley from lower Quartz Mountain, Garfield Mountain on left.*

—PHOTO KEVIN GERAGHTY

# North Cascades Glacier Climate Project 2009

Tom Hammond

**THE TEAM:** This season, the team was a family affair, with Director Mauri Pelto (Nichols College, Mass.), his son Ben (Alfred University, N.Y.), daughter Jill (high school), and hired field assistant Shannon Skinner (Evergreen College, Wash.).

## Columbia Glacier:

July 27-July 30.

It started off nice enough, with a new sign denoting entrance into Wild Sky Wilderness, but that's where the nice ended, at least for this day. Record heat induced a slow pace and a desire to rest/hydrate. But as soon as we stopped, we were covered in black flies.

We arrived at Blanca Lake to discover it had no ice or snow at all — remember that last year, Blanca Lake was virtually frozen over.

We would spend the next three days living on the glacier and by the lake, surrounded by glory of the North Cascades.

This past winter, it was a great year for snow at all elevations, but especially at low elevations. It was also a great year for big avalanches, and this was evident throughout our visit to Columbia. Indeed, the avalanche cycle provided some amazing snowcave formation, as well as a nice covering of snow on the terminus of the Columbia. The new lakes are there, but they were easily walked due to snow. That said, the avalanche snows could not hide the obvious — the Columbia is disappearing, and this year would see significant negative mass-balance.

The reason for the negative mass-balance is that we've had the driest May-August on record. Record heat didn't help things...

Cities throughout the Puget Sound region set record official temps, not for the day, but in history — since records have been kept (1891) with Seattle at 103°F and Arlington at 107°F.

While the heat was scorching the lowlands, we were throwing on jackets at mid-glacier, as the breeze coming down-glacier



*Blanca Lake: It is very unusual to see reflections in this huge lake, as it is rarely wind-free. From left to right, you see Columbia Peak (two big towers), Wilmans Peak(s), the Columbia Glacier below Monte Cristo Pass, Monte Cristo Peak, and Kyes Peak (three towers on right). — PHOTO TOM HAMMOND*

was chilly. Melt waters on the glacier were remarkable. By afternoon each day we were there, super-glacial trickles had turned in to full-blown creeks, carving and cutting the glacier with runnels more than a meter deep! Small streams are common on the Columbia, but these were fast rushing torrents. The main outlet stream of the glacier steps out of the upper cirque of high peaks in a series of spectacular cascades — North Cascades one might say — roaring with an intensity that shakes the air and quickens the pulse as the water races to Blanca Lake.

With the heat, there came convection in the atmosphere, and despite forecasts that indicated a diminishing threat of thunderstorms on Tuesday, we watched a massive cell about 15 miles south of us. It made for a great light show after dark, but didn't come close enough to threaten us. Wednesday was a different story. A towering cumulonimbus cloud erupted from behind Monte Cristo Peak, and another shot up closely west of us from behind the south ridge of Columbia Peak. They went from puffy little clouds at 4:30 p.m. to rumbling, thunderstorms by 5:30. We quickly moved off the terminus of the glacier to the relative safety of camp just as

it started to rain. Thunder echoed far and near, and then nearer. The sky darkened and the show began! Lightning flashed with greater frequency — it was all cloud-to-cloud, with the cloud bases about 2,000 feet above the peaks. Lightning stayed up in the clouds, turning the towering clouds in to huge flickering lamps. Lightning would arc out from the base of a cloud and race across the sky to meet another bolt — then these two bolts would turn in to four, or six more, and branch across the cloud bottoms, chasing each other around the sky.

Now for the science — that's why we do this, after all:

The Columbia Glacier has a mass-balance of minus .6 meters. Even with a

huge winter snowpack (1.5+ meters at Big Four picnic area all winter), and a healthy avalanche cycle, the Columbia will lose nearly two feet of ice! This provides a key lesson in glacier science: summer melting is a more critical component to mass balance than a good winter.

I missed the Mount Baker and Shuksan Glaciers (July 31-August 6).

Easton Glacier has a mass-balance of minus .9 meters.

The northern sector of the North Cascades had about 75 percent of the historic mean snowfall, so starting with a deficit, and then throwing in a hot, dry summer means big losses for the usually snowy Baker area.

Sholes Glacier has a mass-balance of minus 1.75 meters.

Mauri reports that the entire glacier was exposed blue ice — hardly any snow covered the Sholes. The team counted 119 mountain goats in three main groups around the Sholes, their favorite summertime location. This is by far the largest numbers in the past decade or more. On a very disturbing note, the team witnessed

*Continued on page 13*

## Glacier Climate Project, *continued from page 12*

multiple incursions of aircraft (two fixed wing, one helicopter) into wilderness, apparently to count the goats. The aircraft caused great distress to the herds of goats, causing them to scatter.

Rainbow Glacier has a mass-balance of minus 1.15 meters.

Lower Curtis Glacier has a mass-balance of minus 1.23 meters.

These are huge losses, and from what is historically the snowiest place in the state.

### August 7

#### Big Four

While not a full-blown glacier, the avalanche fan/snow caves at Big Four offer a nice insight in to avalanche cycles, and low-elevation accumulation. No mass-balance data, but I will return in October to find out how much snow has melted off.

### August 8-10

Mount Daniel (Ice Worm, Daniels, Lynch glaciers)

The Mount Daniel area had about 100 percent of “normal” historic snowfall, so we hoped this might translate in to better numbers than those on the northern sector.

The Ice Worm (aka Hyas Creek) Glacier is pretty much gone — the new lakes at the terminus were covered with snow, but the entire upper glacier is snow-free blue ice that featured many small running streams. As Mauri notes, this glacier

is melting at the top as fast or faster than at the bottom, mainly because avalanche snows scrub off snow at the top, and collect at the bottom.

The Daniels Glacier and Lynch Glacier are done as a combination, and are much larger — displaying some “big mountain” features such as bergschrunds and deep, wide crevasses. I should note that the Daniels and Lynch make for one of longest, hardest days of the entire field season. We worked for 10½ hours on Sunday — the Daniels is very steep, up to 37 degrees, and the Lynch is reached by crossing the Daniels. To reach the Daniels requires a long traverse around the northeast arm of Mount Daniel — a very unpleasant combination of steep gullies, loose unstable rock and gravel, and snowfields.

The Daniels Glacier marks the headwaters of the Cle Elum River, literally the source of summer water for farms, communities, animals and folks. The right side of the glacier also marks the divide — just over the craggy ridge cradling the west side of the glacier is the Lynch Glacier, which marks the headwaters of the Skykomish River. Many more farms and communities and animals depend on the Lynch, the second largest glacier (behind the Columbia) feeding the Skykomish system.

After an exciting ascent of the Daniels (complete with crossing very threatening avalanche debris fields/boulders), we

made it to the Lynch Glacier. The clouds streaming to the crest from the wet west side engulfed us, limiting visibility and pictures. Drat. Still, data gathering continued, and we descended to the terminus for a bit of lunch. During lunch, we were fortunate enough to have the clouds lift just enough to see around us, and gaze at amazing Pea Soup Lake. The Lynch Glacier ends well short of the lake. In the mid 1970s, the glacier covered this .5 square km lake, and as recently as the mid 1980s, Mauri walked across the lake on glacier ice, then hopping to ice chunks and snow. After lunch, we ascended the Lynch Glacier in its entirety, taking precise snow-depth/mass-balance measurements, ending up at the summit ‘scrund. Simply spectacular. We spent just a few minutes at the summit before descending the Daniels Glacier, enjoying some great boot skiing/glissading, and taking the final measurements and data gathering of the 2009 season. All three glaciers on Mount Daniel show minus .5 to minus 1.25 meters range for mass-balance.

Thus completes the 26th field season for the North Cascades Glacier Climate Project.

Please see the official website at:

<http://www.nichols.edu/departments/Glacier/>



*Pea Soup Lake sits below the Lynch Glacier. Prior to the mid-1970s when the glacier covered the lake, it was a true “pass lake”, with waters flowing both east to the Cle Elum River, and west to the Skykomish River.*

— PHOTO TOM HAMMOND

# Reiter Forest: *DNR's ORV Problems*

August 27, 2009

RE: DNR Reiter Forest

Dear Commissioner Goldmark,

Thanks to you and your staff for taking the time to tour DNR's Reiter Forest with us on Friday, August 21, to view the resource damage caused by off-road vehicles (ORVs). We appreciate that you have been working hard on many challenging matters since you became commissioner earlier this year.

At the boundary of the recently closed area east of Deer Creek, we observed evidence of recent entry into the closed area. At our hike's turnaround point, we were about a hundred yards shy of an "oxbow" further up the user-created 4x4 "tube buggy" route that we were following. Attached is a photo I shot at the "oxbow" in February, and there are many other photos like it. They illustrate several points, including Mike Town's description of that 4x4 route and its tree damage as relatively new (as shown by the color of the bare wood of tree trunks where the bark has been stripped off by passing 4x4s). In response to Mike's comment, DNR's David Way disagreed and said this user-created 4x4 route was older and had even been "inventoried" in the past (i.e., inventoried by DNR staff), which raises additional questions about DNR's awareness of such damage and "management" of it.

Those who advocate for continued ORV use of this area have been in denial about the magnitude of the damage. Until recently, DNR public communications about Reiter conspicuously failed to acknowledge the damage. Even this month, DNR local staff initially refused our requests to include Deer Creek on your tour. During the tour, one of the ORV reps told the group that a damaged tree trunk had been "nicked" by a 4x4. On the contrary, the 4x4 routes created by "tube buggies" in Reiter Forest commonly have many trees on which several square feet of bark have been stripped off of the lower trunk of each tree by the tires and chassis of "tube buggies" squeezing between the trees. Hundreds of trees, possibly thousands, have been killed by "tube buggies" at Reiter. This is no way for a state agency to grow trees on public trust lands.

During our tour, the ORV reps attempted to attribute the ORV-caused damage to the lack of management and/or enforcement, erroneously implying



*Reiter user-created 4x4 route. —KARL FORSGAARD PHOTO*



*Commissioner Goldmark (center) talking with ORVers from Oregon at Reiter.*  
—KARL FORSGAARD PHOTO

that such damage would not occur if DNR had a greater presence on the ground for management and enforcement. We agree that a greater degree of management and enforcement is needed at Reiter, but it does not follow that serious negative impacts will cease if the same types and amount of motorized use continues. Although increased DNR presence can reduce the frequency of some violations (such as trespass into closed areas), no amount of “management” is going to keep trees from being killed when “tube buggies” keep trying to squeeze between trees to go cross-country through a fir-hemlock forest.

There are some types of use that should not be allowed on public lands. If there is user demand for such extreme “use,” let the private sector address it on private lands, as they do with recreational bulldozing (an actual “sport”) and other “extreme” sports. The public trust rights of all citizens are violated when a small minority is allowed to abuse and irreparably damage public resources, especially when there is no redeeming social value being served. What we observed at Reiter was rampant vandalism.

The management plan for Reiter needs to include a detailed enforcement plan to ensure that the ORV-caused damage will stop, as well as a plan for repair and restoration of damaged areas. If certain types of ORV use (such as “tube buggies”) are temporarily banned for a probationary period, we suggest it be long enough (perhaps five years) for the success or failure of restoration efforts to be determined before the most damaging uses are allowed back in, if at all.

The environmental community is upset that during the Reiter SEPA advisory committee process there was only minimal discussion of the resource damage done by the motorized community, and that over the last 5 years DNR staff did not write any enforcement tickets for environmental damage caused at Reiter by motorized users.

The environmental community has made a great effort to follow the Reiter SEPA advisory committee process, without publishing our concerns to the media. We have gathered support from most of the public lands community for the idea of some continuation of motorized use at Reiter, if a reasonable management plan can be achieved. We have also continually tried to work with the motorized community to devise a joint strategy to raise money to address environmental restoration. Our outreach has been constantly ignored throughout the Reiter process.

Protecting the Wild Wallace area in Reiter Forest could solve some of these problems. The Wild Wallace area lies between May Creek and the Wallace River, and it connects Wallace Falls State Park to the Wild Sky Wilderness. Protecting this area would preserve significant riparian areas and wildlife corridors – it has high conservation value, worthy of NRCA status. We believe protecting this area as an NRCA or as an addition to Wallace Falls State Park could address some of the concerns of the environmental community if a different section of Reiter were to be designated as an ORV area (as is currently proposed). Furthermore, we believe that the environmental community

could raise the funds to offset the timber value lost to the trust, either from private donations (using the Loomis Forest campaign model) or legislative action. Some of this money could even be used to acquire the private land that creates the bottleneck at Reiter – thus potentially adding to the motorized and/or mountain bike acreage at Reiter. It is possible that the motorized and non-motorized communities could even work together to achieve this land transfer, since both sides would achieve some benefit to their members. It could even be a model for solving other use conflict issues in the state, and should achieve some bipartisan support. We hope that DNR is willing to conduct a feasibility study for protecting Wild Wallace, and not enter this area with potential timber sales until this idea is fully investigated.

We look forward to working with you and your staff to prepare a reasonable management plan for the Reiter Forest. On behalf of the state’s non-motorized majority of outdoor recreationists and conservationists, thanks again for your attention to these matters.

—Karl Forsgaard

# Teanaway Forestlands at Risk

In August, Kittitas County launched a planning process for 55,000 acres of privately owned forestlands of the Teanaway River valley. Under the Growth Management Act (GMA), Kittitas County's Comp Plan has designated this area as forestland of long-term significance. The principal owner seeks to change that designation, so that the land could be converted to uses other than forestry.

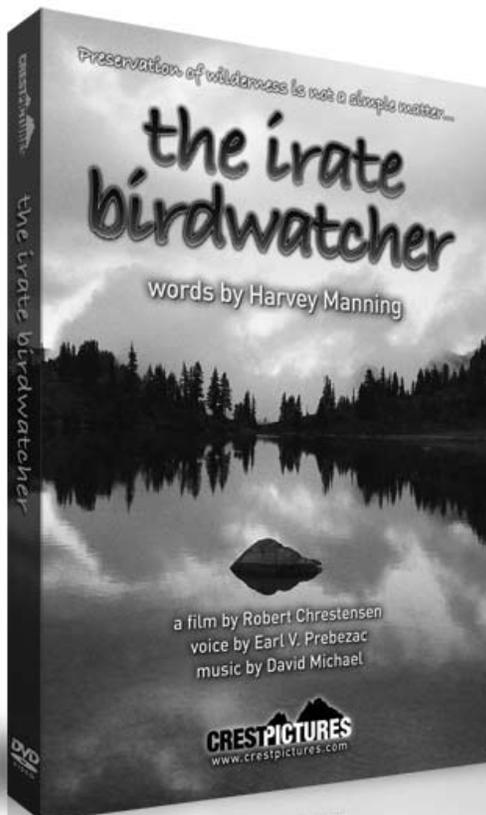
Conservation organizations are opposing the proposed de-designation, because the area can continue to be managed for commercial forestry, and conversion to other uses would adversely affect the environment including fish and wildlife habitat.

In addition, there are many economic and practical constraints on development of this land, such as the limited water supply, limited public facilities and services, limited access, and oversupply of vacant housing in the surrounding area.

These private forestlands are south of the national forest, familiar to those who have driven up the North, Middle or West Forks of the Teanaway. At 55,000 acres, this area is many times larger than any prior forestland de-designation proposals under the GMA, anywhere in the state. American Forest Land Company (formerly known as U.S. Timberlands) owns 46,000 of the acres, and AFLC is paying the county's costs of

conducting this new process for the Teanaway. Because the county is understaffed, it hired a consulting land-use planner to run the process (at AFLC expense).

The county's process timeline includes several rounds of public meetings and hearings for the DEIS, EIS, Comp Plan amendments and development regulations, expected to go through the end of 2010. Public comment can be submitted to the county through its website, which has several pages devoted to this Upper Teanaway Subarea Plan process at: <http://www.co.kittitas.wa.us/cds/teanaway.asp>



*The Irate Birdwatcher (Harvey Manning) walks the mountains once again in the film by Robert and Kathy Chrestensen.*

## **The Irate Birdwatcher**

**Premiere showing by**

**The Mountaineers**

**7 p.m., November 4**

**Mountaineers Building**

7700 Sand Point Way NE, Seattle

The Irate Birdwatcher, whom long-time readers of *The Wild Cascades* will recognize as the nom-de-plume of Harvey Manning, wrote much about his love for the Cascades. From his first hike to Marmot Pass as a thirteen-year-old, through his years as a climber and hiker, his writings evoke his deep affinity for wilderness — the hills, larches, bears, meadows, flying spiders, beaches, even rain (“rain is only water and skin is waterproof”), and he delights us. His contempt for rampant development added a more trenchant and often witty, note to his vivid prose.

The film is a beautiful testament to the man and his lifework. It reveals his great wit and charm, his thoughts and experiences over the years, his deep love for the wild and, his hopes and dreams for the future. Plus there's a bit of him on his usual soapbox. It's quintessential Harvey.

The Irate Birdwatcher will soon be available;  
for more information check:

[http://www.crestpictures.com/irate\\_birdwatcher/](http://www.crestpictures.com/irate_birdwatcher/)

Watch the film's 3-minute trailer at:

<http://www.crestpictures.com/>

# Harvey Manning Statue Dedication



On a sunny Sunday afternoon in Issaquah on September 20, friends, family, and admirers gathered on SE Bush Street for the unveiling of a statue to a major figure in Northwest conservation — Harvey Manning. Life-size bronze of a larger-than-life man, Harvey sits on a set of erratic boulders that were moved from his home, looking up to the Issaquah Alps with the suggestion of a satisfied smile on his rugged face.

Faithful to its model, the bronze Harvey wears well-worn boots, baggy pants and has in hand his ever-present spiral-bound notebook, subtly inscribed with part of one of his visionary aphorisms, “When the world seems to be shrinking, make it larger by going slower. Sit and it becomes infinite”.

The man who, as his daughter Penelope mentioned, is synonymous with the creation of the North Cascades National Park, the Alpine Lakes Wilderness, the Washington State Wilderness Act of 1984, the Issaquah Alps, Cougar Mountain Regional Wildland Park and

the Mountains to Sound Greenway. Harvey was also the first editor of *Mountaineering*, *The Freedom of the Hills*, and founder of the Issaquah Alps Trails Club. He is now honored (in a way he almost certainly would not have approved) with a bronze by sculptor Sara Johani, for which NCCC was a major contributor.

Steve Williams, Issaquah Trails Club president, acting as master of ceremonies introduced speakers, including Ava Frisinger, mayor of Issaquah; Ken Konigsmark, IATC vice-president; Penelope Manning; Doug McClelland from DNR; sculptor Sara Johani; David Kappler, Issaquah city councilor; Allan F. Osberg, friend; and Doug Simpson, sculpture committee chair, all of whom spoke to Harvey’s achievements, and to his personality. Penelope Manning quoted Rick McGuire to the effect that “Harvey could be abrasive and wasn’t politically correct in any way, but in a time of when everything is made for the media and shaped by focus groups, Harvey said what he believed and didn’t worry about his image. He left the

Cascades a much better place than he found them.”

The unveiling of the statue brought to light not only the bronze Harvey, glinting in the sun, but also a nested teddy bear, Harvey’s own walking stick, hat and an old boot of his, now serving as a plant pot. Seated in pride of place in the front row of spectators was Harvey’s wife, our editor, Betty Manning, to whom we owe particular gratitude, for she is said to be the only person who could decode Harvey’s handwriting.

A reception that followed the dedication fittingly celebrated the 30th birthday of the Issaquah Alps Trails Club.

As I was leaving the statue for home, a group of people out for a Sunday walk asked me who it was. I briefly described his legacy, pointed to the forested skyline and left them standing in awe.

—John Edwards

*ABOVE: NCCC Board Chairman Patrick Goldsworthy stands beside his friend and compatriot.*

—PHOTO BY JOHN EDWARDS

# A Welcome Change for the Nation's Forests

On August 15 2009, in Seattle, US Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced that the Forest Service would not appeal a June 29 court ruling that struck down the Bush administration's 2008 forest planning rule. Further, the Forest Service will seek to lift a Wyoming Federal court injunction that has blocked a 2001 rule that halted road construction and other development on about 58 million acres of national Forest. The Obama administration has thus joined environmental organizations in defending the Roadless Rule established at the close of the Clinton administration.

In his Seattle speech Vilsack emphasized the role of forests in protecting clean water resources, sheltering wildlife and in helping to mitigate the effects of climate change through carbon fixation. The new vision includes decommissioning unnecessary roads and rehabilitating wetlands and streams. In Vilsack's words "Restoration means managing forest lands first and foremost to protect our water resources while making our forests more resilient to climate change.

The concept of "restoration" does raise an element of concern. It is seen by Norm Dicks, for example, as implying better

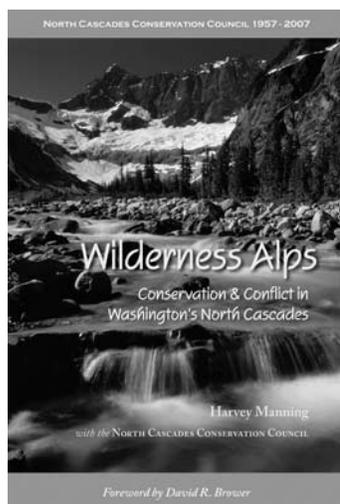
management through thinning to decrease fire risk. Vigilance is in order to make sure that thinning does not become a euphemism for harvest, although Vilsack refers to rehabilitation through the removal of small trees and underbrush that serve as fuel for wildfires. Again, the promotion of research projects to generate biofuels from forest biomass is fraught with potential abuse.

These caveats notwithstanding, Vilsack's decisive stand on the striking down of President Bush's 2008 forest planning rule is to be applauded.

—John Edwards

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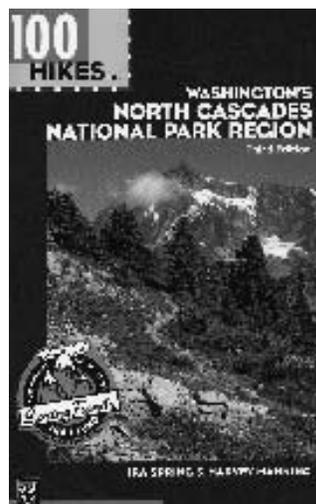
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# Forest Service Closes Middle Fork Snoqualmie Road

## Road repair and bridge construction

On September 8, 2009 the Middle Fork Snoqualmie Road was closed at the forest boundary gate approximately mile post 8.0. The bridge and road repairs should be completed by early December.

"This is for everyone's safety," said Jim Franzel, Snoqualmie District Ranger. "We don't want people trying to dodge heavy equipment while contractors are repairing the road." People who violate the closure can subject to a ticket and fined, Franzel said. The road is closed to all motorized and non-motorized access to the Middle Fork campground, Arch Bridge and all roads up the valley to the Dingford Creek gate including road access to Goldmeyer Hotsprings, Dutch Miller Gap, and Taylor River Trail, he said.

... "We are hoping to have the bridge and road repairs completed by early December," Franzel said.

The Middle Fork Road suffered extensive flood damage and washed out the Taylor River Bridge during the winter storms of 2008-09. "Numerous road sections, stream crossings, bridges and culverts will be repaired," said

The bridge replacement and road repair is part of the Federal Highways Emergency Flood Relief program. Funding for the road repair comes from the Western Federal Lands Highway Division of the Federal Highway Administration under the Emergency Relief to Federally Owned Roads Program.

Unfortunately, the upper road above Taylor River also received damage during the previous winter storms. These sites are scheduled for repairs next year. For more information about roads and trail closures, go to alerts and conditions on <http://www.fs.fed.us/r6/mbs/>.

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# The Granite Falls Motocross Fiasco — An Update

The motocross track project — Five to seven motocross and ATV racing tracks on 75 acres of currently forested land four miles east of Granite Falls adjacent to the Mountain Loop Highway — continues to amaze those of us from the Mountain Loop Conservancy (MLC) who are leading the fight against this unwanted intrusion.

Just when we thought the battle was over, the principal proponent of the project (Gary Strode, heading a group known as the MXGP) unexpectedly submitted new papers from several consultants just prior to the July, 2009 submission deadline. MXGP has also retained the highest priced law firm in the state, Perkins Coie, for its legal advice, indicating that MXGP is well funded. The latest MXGP project submissions to Snohomish County were not considered adequate for evaluation of significance and their deadline has been extended to July 2010.

Even a cursory reading of the newly submitted papers reveals obvious contradictions and shortfalls carried over from previously submitted material. Among the more notable flaws is the continued claim that hours of operation would be from 10 p.m. until 10 p.m. (Actually, we can live with that!) That, together with other stated hours of operation that come a bit closer to making sense, are then undermined by a statement that operations would take

place “during daylight hours only”. The problem is that the other stated hours start in the morning, and also last until 10 p.m. Even the longest day of the year turns totally dark by 10 p.m., so one wonders what the MXGP is thinking when it consistently claims that closing at 10 p.m. is within daylight hours.

In the meantime, the MLC has retained the services of the premier nationally recognized noise consultants, HMMH of Massachusetts, to critique a noise report submitted by ENVIRON, the noise analyst retained by the MXGP. The analysis by HMMH shows deficiencies in ENVIRON’s analysis on virtually all fronts, clearly indicating that the project would exceed county standards for noise during operating hours in the daytime, and perhaps even at night (an analysis that was avoided entirely by ENVIRON) due to campers partying, playing loud music, and working on their racing vehicles. All in all, the HMMH report shoots huge holes into the ENVIRON noise report.

The HMMH analysis, we believe, will force the county and the county Hearing Examiner to think twice about this project. It’s possible that such county consideration will occur as early as October, but perhaps later. But the county may once again request more explicit information

from MXGP. The deadline MXGP faces for a satisfactory submission of information about the project remains next July.

Beyond noise issues, it is obvious that 75 acres of trees help curb global warming; 75 acres of motocross racetracks with vehicles spewing out carbon emissions exacerbate the problem. Trees purify clean water while motorized vehicles pollute water. (The project sits atop a county-mapped “critical aquifer recharge area.”) Trees scrub the air; motorized vehicles pollute it. Forests and quiet recreation are in keeping with the nature of the area, as well as its history; motocross tracks and commercial recreation are antithetical to both.

The challenge for the MLC in fighting this awful project is lack of funding. We can use all the help we can get to pay for legal and professional/technical expenses. This project, if permitted, would have a materially adverse affect on the future of the Mountain Loop highway east of Granite Falls, a designated national scenic byway and the gateway to an area used by tens of thousands of quiet recreationists for decades.

Please send your tax deductible contribution to MLC, P.O.Box 1097, Granite Falls, WA 98252. The MLC is a 501(c)3 organization.

— Bruce Barnbaum

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