
THE WILD CASCADES

THE JOURNAL OF THE NORTH CASCADES CONSERVATION COUNCIL

SUMMER/FALL 2011



In This Issue

- 3 **President's report** — Marc Bardsley
- 4 **DNR plans new trails in Middle Fork and I-90** — Rick McGuire
Wild Sky "Trail Plan" — Rick McGuire
- 5 **Homeland Security trumps environmental integrity** — John S. Edwards
Okanogan PUD abandons plan for Shankers Bend Dam — Rick McGuire
- 6 **North Cascade glacier climate project** — Tom Hammond
- 9 **Celebrate the American Alps Legacy Proposal on December 9th**
- 10 **American Alps Legacy Proposal released to public September 30** — Jim Davis
- 13 **American Alps Legacy Proposal: What and why** — Phil Zalesky
- 15 **Granite Falls motocross project still alive** — Bruce Barnbaum
- 16 **A Pilgrimage to Image Lake via Holden, and a tale of two mines** — Phil Fenner
- 18 **NCCC membership application**
- 19 **NCCC, Sierra Club comment on Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest Plan** — Karl Forsgaard
Roadless Rule upheld—huge win for conservation — Tom Hammond
- 20 **You're invited! NCCC membership event, December 9**

COVER: *Baker River upstream.* —SUE DABNEY PHOTO

The Wild Cascades

Journal of the North Cascades Conservation Council

EDITOR: Anne Basye

EDITOR EMERITUS: Betty Manning

EDITORIAL BOARD: John Edwards, Philip Fenner, Tom Hammond, and Rick McGuire

Printing by EcoGraphics

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

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

The Wild Cascades Editor
North Cascades Conservation Council
University Station, Seattle, WA 98145-2980

THE NORTH CASCADES CONSERVATION COUNCIL was formed in 1957 "To protect and preserve the North Cascades' scenic, scientific, recreational, educational, and wilderness values." Continuing this mission, 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.

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

**Executive Director, Jim Davis
1-360-296-5159**

**NCCC Website
www.northcascades.org**

NCCC Board

PRESIDENT

Marc Bardsley

BOARD CHAIRMAN

Patrick Goldsworthy

VICE PRESIDENT

Charles Ehlert

TREASURER

Tom Brucker

SECRETARY

Phil Zalesky

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Jim Davis

Bruce Barnbaum

Polly Dyer

John Edwards

Philip Fenner

Dave Fluharty

Anders Forsgaard

Karl Forsgaard

Kevin Geraghty

Tom Hammond

Fayette Krause

Dave LeBlanc

Betty Manning

Carolyn McConnell

Rick McGuire

Thom Peters

Mike Town

Laura Zalesky



Founded in 1957
SEATTLE, WASHINGTON

The President's Report Summer/Fall 2011

Back in 2009, we started organizing the American Alps Legacy Project (AALP) to fill in some of the important areas left out of the North Cascades National Park (NCNP) when it was legislated in 1968. Since then the NCCC and our partners in the "coalition" have done an amazing amount of work and accomplished much in the process of bringing about new legislation to complete the goal. At the time of this writing, we expect a bill to be introduced in Congress momentarily.

Releasing proposal details to the public on our website, to key politicians, and to local news media has generated lots of comment. In general, the response to the proposed NCNP additions has been very positive. Sure, there have been negative responses in some editorials and letters to the editor, but we've also seen a comparable amount of support. In some cases, critics have somehow confused the AALP with other more controversial NCCC positions such as forest road rebuilding projects.

I want our members to understand that, despite misrepresentations by some, the American Alps Legacy Project was conceived primarily to provide and protect access for the public so they may enjoy these special places. In my opinion, the National Park approach is the best way to accomplish this goal and to fairly regulate the use of the North Cascades. Don't be misled by those who say we are denying access. Rather, we are encouraging access for the public, now and in the future.

DNR plans new trails in Middle Fork and I-90

By Rick McGuire

The Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is moving ahead with plans to develop new trails in the Mailbox Peak/Granite Creek area of the Middle Fork Snoqualmie. Most of the more than 20,000 acres of DNR lands in the Middle Fork have been protected in the Mt. Si and Middle Fork Snoqualmie Natural Resource Conservation Areas. NRCAs are the state's near-equivalent of Wilderness.

The DNR, especially in King County, has come a long ways from the days when its initials were sometimes said to mean "Department of Nothing Remaining." Once famed for rapacious logging, DNR has become the undisputed leader in land conservation in King County. The jewel in the DNR crown is the Middle Fork Snoqualmie NRCA, with extensive low-elevation lands, including much old forest. If the Alpine Lakes Wilderness expansion currently working its way through Congress is enacted, the combination of state- and federal-protected lowlands in the Middle Fork will surpass any other valley in the Cascades.

Now that the land acquisition and land protection jobs are largely finished, DNR is turning its attention to recreational development. Construction of a new trail to the top of Mailbox Peak at the entrance of the valley is underway. Other new trails to Granite Creek and Granite Lakes are expected soon. DNR is also looking at other trail options and hopes to initiate a public-planning process to look at how and where to develop new trails and facilities in the entire North Bend region. Extensive lands have been acquired not only in the Middle Fork, but also on Rattlesnake Ridge and in the Raging River valley to its south.

The large acreage of new, easily accessible public lands presents opportunities for many new trails for different user groups. Trail planning might be thought of as easy: just pick an attractive destination, draw a line on a map and build it. But there are many more considerations. Since people drive cars to trailheads, parking facilities are a crucial factor. It's a bit like the old saying about war: "amateurs think strategy, professionals think logistics."

Trailhead parking planning and construction—the logistics—can consume much more time, money and effort than the actual trail itself. It's not easy to find suitable places for parking lot construction, especially in mountainous areas. Since heavy use is guaranteed at new trails close to Interstate 90, trailhead parking areas will need to be large. Providing access to a new trail or trails is perhaps the most critical part of the process, and a critical factor in deciding where to invest in building new trails.

NCCC believes that many new trails need to be built in accessible, easily reached places. Trails located at the end of long, failure-prone logging roads will be increasingly difficult to access in years to come. DNR's new trail developments in the Middle Fork and other areas around North Bend are just what is needed to allow more people to enjoy their public lands. NCCC is looking forward to working with DNR and other stakeholders in this exciting process.

Homeland Security trumps environmental integrity

By John S. Edwards

Be prepared for new congressional assaults on environmental integrity this fall and beyond. Approval for piping the bounty of tar sands from Alberta to Texas and postponing clean air are just a start. The Endangered Species Act comes up for renewal and we can expect a barrage of amendments calculated to neutralize or sidestep it.

But that is not all: Under the umbrella of homeland security there are attempts to dismantle or bypass legislation that represents the entire history of acts to protect the environment. In a phrase, homeland security trumps all. The Wilderness Act, the Endangered Species Act, the Clean Air and Water Acts, the National Environmental Protection Act, the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, the Wilderness Act and the National Park Service Organic Act would

all bow to the perceived needs of homeland security.

Imagine a zone stretching one hundred miles inward from coasts and borders around the entire United States. Think of the number of parks and wilderness areas within that zone. For the Northwest it includes Glacier, North Cascades, Olympic and Rainier National Parks, and the Mount Saint Helens National Volcanic Monument. HR 1505, the National Security and Federal Lands Protection Act, introduced April 13, 2011 by Rob Bishop (R Utah) and 50 cosponsors, gives the Secretary for Homeland Security immediate access to any public lands managed by the federal government for the purpose of conducting activities that assist in securing the border. That includes access to maintain and construct roads, construct fences, use

vehicles to patrol, and set up monitoring equipment. This bill would also prohibit the Secretary of the Interior or Agriculture from taking action on public lands which would impede border security on such lands.

Another bill, the Wilderness and Roadless Areas Release Act (HR 1581) introduced by Kevin McCarthy (R Calif) would withdraw protection from vast areas in the name of homeland security. While these bills have a way to go to passage (the most recent action on HR 1505 was July 2011, in the House Natural Resources Subcommittee hearings), they are indicative of forces that would explicitly dismantle decades of environmental protection law.

Wild Sky "Trail Plan"

By Rick McGuire

The Wild Sky Wilderness bill, which cleared Congress in 2008, included a provision directing the Forest Service (FS) to study trail opportunities in and around the Wilderness. The FS has solicited public input, although there is no mandate, and certainly no funding, to make anything actually happen.

NCCC and sister groups submitted comments supporting the development of new trail opportunities along Highway 2, and recommending against building new trails that would depend on long, failure-prone roads for access. With money and resources to maintain logging roads steadily diminishing and fuel prices likely to rise in future, it makes sense to put new trails in places where people will be able to get to them over the long term.

There are many places along Highway 2 where new trails could be developed. Trails that climb to viewpoints that are not mountain summits would provide options

for people who may not be able to climb 3000 feet or more.

NCCC and partner groups used to circulate lists of new trail ideas, but can no longer do so because a certain segment of the trail "community" has taken it upon itself to clear routes and build unofficial bootleg trails wherever it chooses. This illegal and damaging activity has happened in at least two places suggested by NCCC for new trails. Someone goes in and flags and clears a route, and at first the "trail" is a delightful bed of moss. But with any degree of use, it soon becomes an eroding, muddy rut, especially in a steep wet place like Skykomish.

Unfortunately, this problem is growing. It appears that the FS may have even encouraged it, or at least looked the other way, in places such as the "Pratt Connector" trail in the Middle Fork Snoqualmie valley. The FS decreed that there was an "existing trail" when in fact there was

none. Bootleg trail builders gave the FS the "facts on the ground" that it wanted.

NCCC would like to see many new trails built in accessible places to provide opportunities for people to enjoy their public lands and hopefully combat "nature deficit disorder." But the activity of bootleg trail builders makes it difficult to publicly discuss where new trails should go.

The entire discussion may be moot, since the FS has almost no money for trail construction. Although amounts are steadily diminishing, millions of dollars still go into rebuilding crumbling logging roads every year, most of which don't go anywhere or provide any public benefit. But there is little or no money for trail building – an unfortunate state of affairs. Perhaps wealthy individuals will step forward someday and offer to pay for them.

Okanogan PUD abandons plan for Shanker's Bend Dam

By Rick McGuire

The Okanogan Public Utility District (PUD) has withdrawn its application with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) to study construction of a dam at Shanker's Bend on the Similkameen River. The dam would have flooded the Similkameen valley a fair distance north across the boundary into British Columbia. Needless to say, the Canadians were not happy about that prospect, once they found out about it from NCCC. The PUD neglected to inform them that they were considering submerging one of their valleys.

The entire Shanker's Bend proposal always had a strange air of unreality about it. The idea of backing up water into Canada was absurd. None of the outlined alternatives would have made any sense, and even the PUD admitted that the project would have generated little power for only a small part of the year during high runoff, when need is lowest. The Similkameen watershed is an area of generally

low rainfall, and the river has a short peak flow season in June. The most common reaction to the proposal was "are these people living in the real world?"

What was the thinking behind it, then? The PUD must have spent well into seven figures on the small army of lawyers, engineers and consultants who drew up the ill-conceived plans. Could someone in PUD management, or a friend or relative, have gained from that spending? We don't know, but we do know that the ratepayers of Okanogan PUD will end up paying for plans that never had a chance of going anywhere, to produce a negligible amount of power for a PUD in no need of it.

The public power movement is an iconic part of Northwest history. Public utility districts were a great idea when they were formed in the 1930's and 1940's, but sadly, many of them have drifted far from their roots. Like so many "non-profit" entities, many PUDs have ended up captured by their employees and serving their interests

more than their ratepayers. Most jobs at PUDs tend to be well paid, secure, and not very demanding – almost the definition of "sinecure." People in such positions, especially top management, often come to believe that the things they want to be true really are true despite overwhelming evidence to the contrary. A crazy idea like Shanker's Bend can take root, and no one in the organization wants to contradict the managers, big fish in a small pond who control the jobs of those below them.

Whatever the real story, the withdrawal of the Shanker's Bend proposal is a relief. It was a crazy idea, but being crazy isn't always enough to stop something. Luckily, it seems to have been enough in this case. Conservationists hope that the remains of Enloe dam, another ill-fated and abandoned dam that still blocks fish passage on the Similkameen below the site of Shanker's Bend, can be removed to allow salmon to return to the Similkameen.



Contrasting mountains, positive mass balance: North Cascade Glacier Climate Project

By Tom Hammond

Slope and alpine glaciers act as bellweathers for climate change. Long before “global warming” and “climate change” were part of our lexicon, Professor Mauri Pelto picked the glaciers of the North Cascades to study climate, as glaciers reflect long-term changes in climate, not just year-to-year weather variability, with high fidelity. The North Cascade Glacier Climate Project (NCGCP), which Professor Pelto launched in 1984, surveys nine glaciers, chosen on the basis of location (wet west to dry east, south to north), aspect (south-facing slopes through to north-facing slopes) and type (avalanche-fed vs. “traditional” slope).

The NCGCP is one of the only studies in the world that gathers data “on the

ground.” Instead of remote sensing via aircraft or satellite, data is gathered with boots on ice, taking snow-depth measurements across transects of the glacier to give a sharp picture of mass balance. Crevasse stratigraphy is important in mass-balance data. As well, longitudinal profiles are conducted using laser ranging to measure the changing length and width of glaciers, and outflow (water running off the glacier) is measured when possible at the terminus of glaciers in the study.

Each August for the last eight years, I have participated in portions of the NCGCP field season. This year, Professor Pelto included me for the northern-sector glaciers on the flanks of Mount Shuksan, the most glaciated non-volcanic peak

in the range, and the northeast side of Kulshan (Mount Baker), a spectacular 3,300-meter stratovolcano draped with glaciers. Our team included Pelto’s son Ben, daughter Jill, and Ian Delaney. I joined them at the second stop, the Lower Curtis Glacier on the southwest flanks of Shuksan. From there, we’d traverse across “The Interface” to the Shoales and the mighty Rainbow Glacier on Kulshan.

Members of the North Cascade Glacier Climate Project field team traverse snowy Ptarmigan Ridge on the way to measure the Shoales and Rainbow glaciers.

—TOM HAMMOND PHOTO

The Interface is where 90-million-year-old schist and gneiss of Shuksan contacts the one-million-year-old andesite flows of Kulshan. So cool to have these contrasting mountains so proximate to each other.

Did I say proximate? In mountain terms they are very close, but in human terms the distance makes for heavy, hard hiking. More so this season because the snow pack is at record levels—the most snow seen in August in the 28 years of the project, and probably since the 1974-75, or earlier. This year the Artist’s Point trail-head was under about five meters of snow! This is good news for glaciers in our area. It isn’t huge winter snowfall but summer heat—or the lack thereof—that dictates snowpack survival from one year to the next (glacier positive mass balance). By August 1, Seattle had hit 80 degrees less than five times this year, and it showed in the North Cascades.

August 4-6, Lower Curtis Glacier

I enjoy hiking snow, and this year the snow is some of the best I’ve ever seen—firm, with little breakthrough/postholing. Measurements at the Columbia had been limited due to the snow, but this would not be the case on the Lower Curtis, and indeed, the snow allowed us to access the terminus. It was so spectacular to walk beside blue towers of ice, huge layered fins stretching a neck-straining 20 meters vertically above us—raining water constantly, and throwing stones off at random, unmoving, but never still.

The terminus has retreated laterally 117 meters since 1985, and has retreated visibly since I first saw it in 2004—some 30 meters gone in seven years—that’s 30 meters wide by 20 meters high, by a couple hundred meters long...gone.

Throughout the five days I was out, the weather was perfect. Marine layers would flex in and out of the area, driven by diurnal heating and weak flow off the Pacific. It made for spectacular atmosphere/land interaction, with clouds forming and dissipating all the time, every day. Evenings would usually clear off and stay clear until a few hours after sunrise. The rest of the time, clouds would shift and drift around the high peaks and glaciers, threatening nothing more than a chance at missed award-winning photos.

Fortunately, I had the camera at the ready and captured some amazing images. It is so fun to be standing in warm sun one minute, only to be engulfed by a thin veil of cloud, still able to see for miles, all objects sporting a halo of glowing vapor.

Surreal. Ground mists would arise from the snow each evening, a layer about a meter deep of cloud, tinged orange with alpenglow. It’s all about the water, and this was a magical experience with the most important molecule we know.

August 6-8, Shoales and Rainbow Glaciers

The fact we had to hike all the way from Shuksan to Kulshan in a day was both a blessing and a curse. We were looking at more than 11 miles with full packs, most every step on snow. As it was, we did about eight miles, most of us dragging a bit. Camping this far from the Shoales and Rainbow would likely result in less time on the glaciers; but the snow would be so deep that we wouldn’t have to take as many measurements. Indeed, Mauri cut a day off our survey.

It was special to start the day on Mount Shuksan and end it on Kulshan. Upon arrival in camp, at Ptarmigan Ridge, where two ptarmigans were kind enough to share their spot with us. At points through the afternoon they were literally within a meter or two of the tent, picking away at flowers and tender shoots just emerging, an oasis of food and solid ground in a sea of snow. Curiously, they were sporting summer plumage even though only about 10 percent of the normal amount of dark ground was visible due to the white snow. We surmised their body clocks only have so much time for mating, and thus aren’t driven by conditions on the ground year to year.

Sunday found us making our way to the Shoales. We discovered small areas of flowering lupine and assorted wildflowers, a welcome splash of color in an otherwise austere world of snow and rock. The Shoales was buried—one specific area that is normally blue ice at this time of year was under three meters of snow. As Mauri noted, he’d never hiked so far to get so few probe measurements—about six to fix the position and boundaries of “the blue ice area.” We lunched at the Portals, overlooking the Shoales to the north and the Rainbow Glacier to the south. It became obvious that we would not make it on to the Rainbow proper—it was already early afternoon, and a round-trip to get any probing or crevasse evaluation would take us hours, likely right up to dark. So we did some photographic assessment (tons of snow, terminus a bombed-out snow shelf) and I agreed to come back at the end of September to do further photo comparison work.

Estimate there will be plus one meter

mass balance (MB) for the Shoales, Rainbow unknown at this time.

We did not see the usual dozens of herds of mountain goats, an indication the snowpack is keeping them out of their normal summer range. We did see a raptor snatch up a pica or marmot, and also saw a coyote running incredibly fast across a steep snow slope.

We only saw three people in the three days on Kulshan—the snow has thrown a lot of hikers off the trail. Understandable, considering there were times on the trail that I was gripping my ice-ax tightly, using the pick to get purchase on a particularly steep section of traverse.

At the parking lot Monday, the US Forest Service asked about my car. They were about to form a search party for the owner since it had been there for so long. No need for a search party, just a shower and some clean clothes.

Day after Autumnal Equinox, 2011

The plan called for an overnighter along Lava Divide on the northeast flank of Kulshan to photograph the Rainbow Glacier, in order to see how much blue ice is exposed after a month of real summer (more than a week of 80F set a Seattle record for September) and one of the driest summers ever. As with all mountain trips, weather is the final arbiter. When the forecast went from “rain Sunday afternoon” to “Tstorms Sunday morning” to “Tstorms Saturday night” to “Tstorms Saturday afternoon,” my wife Athena and I went with a daytrip. It was fun to watch the clouds roll in so rapidly. It went from bright blue skies to brooding storm clouds in a matter of 90 minutes right around noon!

As it is unusual for the NCGCP to use “remote sensing” methods such as photography, it is also unusual to go to such a spectacular place and not spend at least one night. Still, the photos/data were successfully collected! Mauri had teams across the range: we were one of three teams, the others on Columbia Glacier and Easton Glacier. Notable: our encounter with Cody, a young hunter from Everett with a high-powered rifle seeking bear on Lava Divide (I wore red because I knew hunters would be there). As it turned out, there were half-dozen hunters, a team of two with a special goat permit, a group of three seeking bear, plus 10 hikers—very crowded, all things considered.

Cody comported himself with intelligence and engagement, and I complimented him and his parents for teaching enjoyment and respect for the land and to



live life in something other than a video game. It was reassuring to find people on different areas of the political spectrum engaged in good, friendly interaction, with many more things in common than in opposition.

The weather rapidly changed, but not before we enjoyed views of glorious Shuksan and Kulshan. The interface between one-million-year-old rock and 90-million-year-old rock literally at our feet, a rocking and rolling landscape worthy of every accolade you can come up with, and then a few more.

The bugs were plentiful. Especially on the hike out, they clouded around us, taking advantage of creaking knees and sore feet. All four major varieties were represented, black flies the most numerous, and deer flies in full attack: eyes, nose, mouth and ears all subject to high-speed impact. Besides a few ripe huckleberries close to the trailhead, what few berries we saw were tiny green balls. Heck, there were

decent patches of snow along lower Lava Divide (4,400-4,800 feet), something rare even for this snowy place. Another great day in our spectacular North Cascades.

I am thankful for the opportunity to participate in the study and be a part of the team, and it was fun to have my wife for a portion this year! I am also very thankful to have the ability, desire and curiosity to explore our planet.

Final mass-balance numbers for the year are some of the largest positives in all 28 years of NCGCP study (about 20 years negative mass balance on the order of one meter, four years of “break even”, and four years of positive mass balance, usually on the order of one-quarter to one-half meter). 2011 saw the lowest ablation rate of any year over the history of the project, starting in 1984!

For more information on the North Cascade Glacier Climate Project, visit www.nicbols.edu/departments/glacier/.

Upper Curtis Glacier as seen from the Lower Curtis Glacier. The western portion of the glacier (left side as pictured) has thinned visibly over the past decade. —TOM HAMMOND PHOTO

Final numbers

Columbia Glacier: plus 1.4 meters
 Lower Curtis Glacier: plus 1.5 meters
 Sholes Glacier: plus 1.6 meters
 Rainbow Glacier: plus 2.2 meters
 Easton Glacier: plus 1.7 meters
 Ice Worm (aka Hyak Creek) Glacier: plus 1.6 meters
 Daniel Glacier: plus 1.6 meters
 Lynch Glacier: plus 1.2 meters



Meet the NCCC Board Members and Celebrate the American Alps Legacy Project Proposal

Everyone who is interested and involved with conservation in the state of Washington is invited to come on December 9th from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m. to meet the NCCC board members and celebrate the American Alps Legacy Project Proposal vision for extending the North Cascades National Park.

The event also features international mountain climbers Jim Wickwire, John Roskelly, and Steph Abegg, who will share their experiences climbing in the North Cascades.

We hope you'll join us in recognizing the NCCC founders, learning more about the American Alps Legacy Project Proposal, listening to some amazing chronicles of mountaineering expeditions, and getting to know NCCC board members over light refreshments.

See you on Friday, December 9, 2011!
6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.
The Mountaineer-Goodman B
7700 Sandpoint Way, Seattle

Please RSVP to ncccorg@gmail.com



AMERICAN ALPS LEGACY PROPOSAL

American Alps Legacy Proposal released to public September 30

By Jim Davis

After nearly three years of study, field checking, and public input, the American Alps Legacy Proposal to expand the North Cascades National Park was released to the public on September 30, 2011. The proposal recommends converting 237,702 acres of National Forest and National Recreation Area lands to National Park. The proposal also recommends development of additional family-friendly recreation amenities in the Highway 20 corridor and other low-elevation areas included in the proposal.

Enactment of the proposal will bring the North Cascades National Park down to the highway, protect fish and wildlife, elevate public awareness, increase visitation to front-country areas of the expanded Park, and enhance economic benefits in adjacent communities. The American Alps Economic Study demonstrated that more than 1,000 new jobs will be created over the next two decades in communities from Twisp to Concrete. The American Alps Legacy Proposal is a win-win-win proposal, enhancing conservation, recreation, and economic benefits.

On the American Alps website (www.americanalps.org), you can find the full Proposal, links to photos and maps of the area, the American Alps Advisory Committee members, a list of proposed new recreation amenities, the biodiversity report, the economic study, newspaper articles, and of course an opportunity to help support the project with your financial contribution.

Completion of the North Cascades National Park is a long-held dream of North Cascades Conservation Council (NCCC) founding board members, including Patrick Goldsworthy, Polly Dyer, Phil Zalesky, and Laura Zalesky, all of whom are actively promoting the American Alps Legacy Proposal. Their efforts have been supplemented by strong support from former Governor Dan Evans, Peter Jackson, Jim Wickwire, Estella Leopold and other committed members of the American Alps

Advisory Committee. Representatives from NCCC, the Mountaineers, Seattle Audubon, the Federation of Outdoor Clubs, and Republicans for Environmental Protection have also contributed significantly to the project. Most gratifying is the support received from local business owners, who recognize the importance of the American Alps Legacy Proposal to local economies. Financial contributions from the Mountaineers Foundation, Patagonia, the Tulalip Tribes, the Jiji Foundation, and many other committed supporters have made all of our work possible.

Release meets positive response

Release of the American Alps Legacy Proposal prompted excellent newspaper coverage in and around the North Cascades. (See them via the "In the Media" link on the American Alps website.) The newspaper articles prompted several letters-to-the-editor. Most were supportive, while other letters raised concerns about expanding the National Park. These concerns include doubts about the conservation benefits of protecting the land, doubts about the economic benefits of park expansion, restrictions on hunting, impacts on other outdoor recreation activities, and limits on logging.

Protecting biodiversity and promoting economic benefits

Extensive documentation on the biodiversity benefits of the Proposal is

included in a biodiversity report available on the American Alps website. Enactment of the American Alps Legacy Proposal will contribute significantly to biodiversity conservation in the North Cascades. Low-elevation wildlife habitats (essential winter and spring habitats for some species) were left out when the North Cascades National Park was created. Many pristine rivers and streams are not currently protected in the Park, reducing the effectiveness of efforts to recover salmon populations. The fragmented nature of the current Park also undermines efforts to recover

wide-ranging species such as wolverines, grizzly bears, and wolves. Just as important, expansion of the National Park will reduce or eliminate threats from mining, hydropower, biomass removal, and other extractive activities. Some critics claim that the American Alps area is already adequately protected under the Northwest Forest Plan and no additional action is needed. This is dead wrong. As much as conservationists love the Northwest Forest Plan, they must also recognize that it is a plan developed by the Executive Branch of the U.S. government and that it is subject

to change under future administrations. Ongoing efforts seek to undermine the conservation benefits of the Northwest Forest Plan. Congressional action to create new national park land or wilderness is needed to assure long-term biodiversity conservation in the North Cascades.

Initial statements by American Alps proponents on the local economic benefits of national parks were challenged by some opponents of expanding the North Cascades National Park. In response to this challenge, project supporters contracted with Power Consulting, an economic consulting firm based in

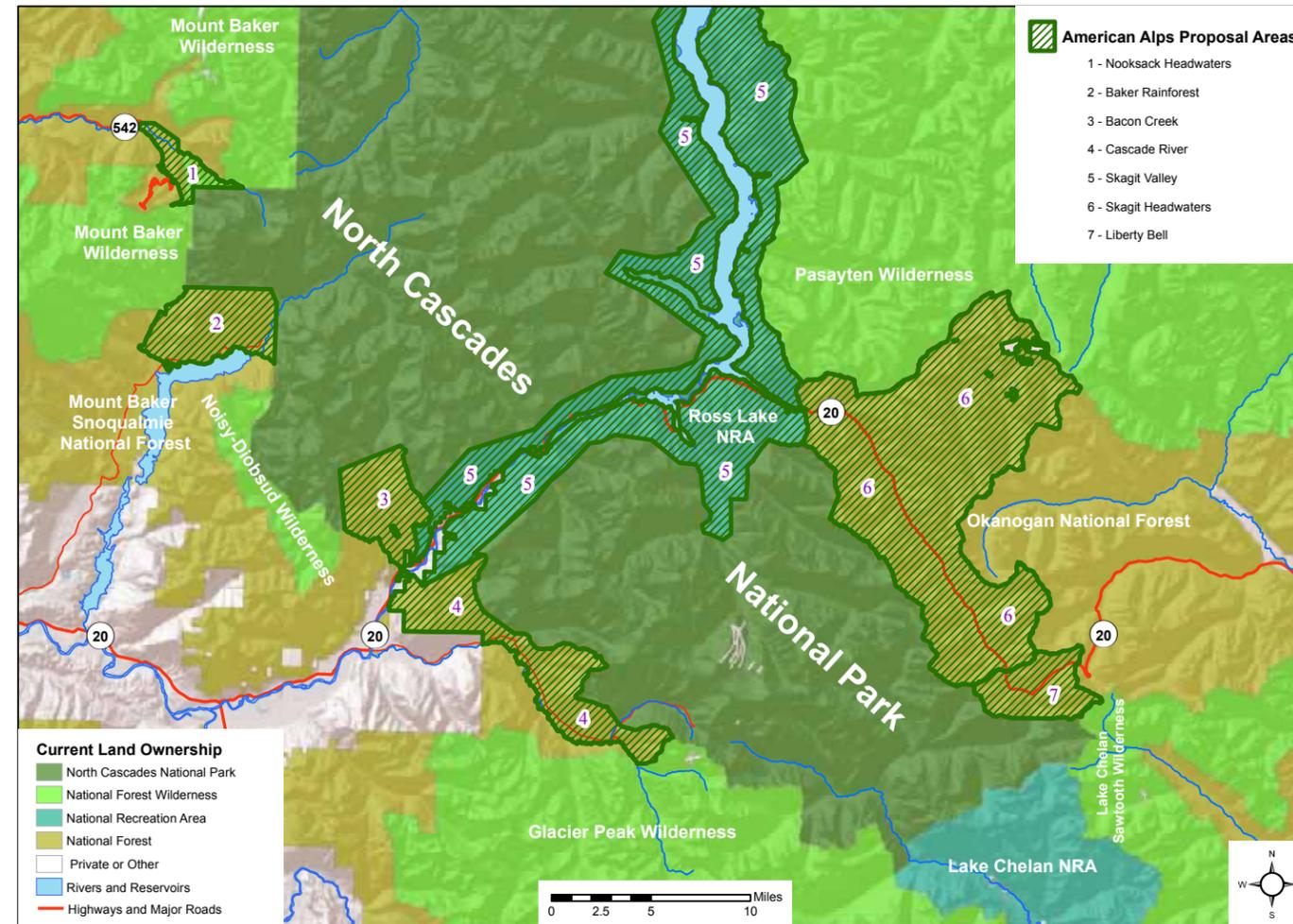
Montana, to examine the current economic benefits associated with the North Cascades National Park and future benefits if the Park is brought down to the highway and family-friendly recreation amenities are added. The study revealed that the North Cascades National Park (combined with the adjoining Ross Lake National Recreation Area) is one of the least-visited National Park Service units in the 48 states. As many local residents will emphatically state, economic expectations associated with creation of the Park in 1968 never materialized. The economic study further documented that enactment of the American Alps Legacy Proposal will generate the economic benefits promised four decades ago. Bringing the

Park down to the Highway and adding recreation amenities will increase visitation and lengthen visitor stays in adjacent communities. After a full 20-year build-out period, the American Alps Legacy Proposal will have brought 1,000 new jobs to communities adjacent to the Park. The full economic study (plus a much shorter Executive Summary) is available on the American Alps website.

Preserving opportunities for hunting, enhancing family recreation opportunities

Unlike National Forest and National Recreation Area lands, hunting is not allowed in national parks. Although the number of hunters is gradually declining in Washington State and throughout the country, some hunters feel threatened by the removal of any land from the hunting base. The American Alps Legacy

Continued on page 12



Map of proposed additions to the North Cascades National Park

Visit www.americanalps.org for links to:

- the full American Alps Legacy Proposal
- photos and maps of the area
- American Alps Advisory Committee members
- proposed new recreation amenities
- biodiversity report
- economic study
- media coverage
- an opportunity to support the project financially!



continued from page 11

Project was conscious of this issue from the beginning. The final Proposal left out about 160,000 acres that were initially considered for park protection. Preserving opportunities for hunting was one of the reasons for eliminating these lands from the Proposal. The American Alps Legacy Proposal would designate less than five percent of huntable public lands in the North Cascades as national park, and most of this is low-elevation land along the Highway 20 corridor or in the Baker and Nooksack River watersheds. These front-country easily accessible lands are ideal for family recreation. Families visiting the North Cascades should not have to worry about a bear-hunting season that starts on August 1st. Visitors will also appreciate improved wildlife viewing opportunities that will come with reduced hunting pressure. Limiting hunting in these low-elevation wildlife habitats (i.e., creating wildlife refuges) will also increase game populations and enhance hunting on adjacent lands. The American Alps Legacy Proposal is a balanced and reasonable proposal that preserves ample opportunities for hunting while enhancing family recreation opportunities in the North Cascades.

The North Cascades is a popular area with many users. Hikers, backpackers, horseback riders, paragliders, cross-country skiers, climbers, and others cherish their access to pristine lands in the North Cascades. With the exception of free backcountry camping permits and party-size limits, most of these uses will continue unchanged in the lands covered by the American Alps Legacy Proposal. The free permits required by the Park Service are designed to limit overcrowding in especially popular areas. This enhances the experience of all visitors and preserves the pristine quality of the National Park. Party-size limits are designed to protect wildlife and enhance backcountry experiences of wildness and solitude. The Proposal recommends continuation of current party-size limits for backcountry camping involving non-profit organizations that provide services for youth. The near-vertical terrain and dense forests of the American Alps Legacy Proposal area preclude most

mountain biking, with no popular mountain biking trails identified in the area. Dog walking is an activity that would be restricted under Park status. However, as a dog owner, I know that there are many ideal dog-walking areas in the North Cascades in the more than 95 percent of public lands not included in the proposal. Setting aside less than five percent of the public lands in the North Cascades for a dog-free wildlife refuge is not a major imposition on dog walkers. Motorized activities such as heli-skiing and snowmobiling will be limited on Park Service lands, but the most popular areas for these sports are outside the final American Alps Legacy Proposal area, including the upper Methow Valley and the Highway 20 corridor (state property that will not be regulated by the Park Service).

Areas on the west side of the North Cascades National Park were left out in 1968 to enable continued logging of old-growth and mature second-growth forests on low-elevation lands. Although portions of these lands have been logged, significant old-growth and mature second-growth forests remain. Some opponents of the American Alps Legacy Proposal hope for a return to the good-old days of the timber economy. They do not want valuable timber "locked up" in a national park. In fact, local economies in the North Cascades are now far more dependent on tourism associated with outdoor recreation and natural area visitation. Further, only small portions of National Forest lands in the Proposal area are currently available for logging (a few thousand acres in Bacon Creek). Low-elevation front-country lands in the Nooksack, Baker, Bacon, and Cascade areas of the Proposal are much more

AMERICAN ALPS LEGACY PROPOSAL



Skagit Valley from above Newbalem. —KEVIN GERAGHTY PHOTO

suitable now for three- or four-season recreation.

Awareness of these concerns prompted several changes in the final American Alps Legacy Proposal map compared to the original study-area map. Mountain biking, hunting, dog walking, and heli-skiing are popular in the upper Methow River watershed. National park impacts on these existing uses, plus local concerns about too much economic development near Mazama, led American Alps supporters to withdraw this area from the proposal. However, Methow Valley residents are strongly encouraged to focus on future management of public lands in the upper Methow Valley. The potential for significant conservation gains still exists and major threats to biodiversity (mining, hydropower, water storage dams, and biomass harvest) still remain. Action needs to be taken soon to protect these lands. In contrast to east side concerns, local demand for improved access to the North Cascades National Park led to addition of land in the Nooksack headwaters that would bring the Park down to Highway 542 and provide front-country access.

Continued on page 14

AMERICAN ALPS LEGACY PROPOSAL

What and why? By Phil Zalesky

Every once in a while it is necessary to remind ourselves of the major conservation goals we are striving to achieve. This is true, especially, of our attempt to bring the American Alps Legacy Proposal to fruition. We all need to be re-informed as to what this project is and why we pursue it. I will attempt here to give our readers a briefing on the "what and why" behind the American Alps Legacy Proposal.

One of the areas proposed for addition to North Cascades National Park includes federal lands extending along Highway 20 from just east of Marblemount to Washington Pass. This proposed park addition extends on both sides of the highway, with most of the area touching the existing North Cascades National Park and the Pasayten Wilderness. This may be the last large and suitable land mass in the continental United States available and worthy to be designated as national park.

Many people driving on Highway 20 believe they are traveling through the North Cascades National Park. Instead they are now traveling through Ross Lake National Recreation Area and Forest Service lands. For the most part, these lands are covered with virgin forests. The American Alps Legacy Proposal also includes low-elevation Forest Service lands in the Cascade River, Bacon Creek, Baker River, and Nooksack River watersheds. These proposed park additions are heavily forested, with extensive old-growth remaining in some areas.

Some of us in North Cascades Conservation Council (NCCC), of which I was founding member, and The Mountaineers (also a member) were the principal proposers in the 1960s of the idea for a North Cascades National Park. We were terribly disappointed that Congress excluded the Highway 20 corridor and other Forest Service lands from the 1968 national park bill.

Why were these lands not included in the park? We were completely surprised to learn that a political compromise had

been reached in the federal government, and that drawing of the boundaries in the North Cascades National Park Enabling Act had been turned over to the Forest Service.

Needless to say, the Forest Service was interested in the "low-hanging fruit" available in low-elevation river valleys, the best land for producing logs for the mills. Senator Jackson, chair of the Senate Interior Committee, told us this was the best he could do. Senator Jackson said, "Maybe working on this in ten years or more you may have success." We thought about continuing the struggle at the time, but we knew that our friends supporting creation of the park would leave us in their excitement over any park bill passing. The Senate and House of Representative's bill had us over a barrel. Take it or leave it.

After much debate, we felt we had to accept it, but we resolved to come back in the future to achieve our conservation vision. Now it is 43 years later and the national park idea is even more attractive to the public. Public Broadcasting's recent Ken Burns television series on The National Parks has added to the spirit and values of the national park concept, making our proposal even more desirable in the eyes of the public.

The 1968 park bill excluded most of the low-elevation lands in the North Cascades and set them aside for future logging. It is that future (extensive logging in the North Cascades) that a new act of Congress can prevent. That is the conservation legacy we are promoting with the American Alps Legacy Proposal.

If logging were to ever take place in the American Alps Legacy Proposal areas, major North Cascades' ecosystems could be critically compromised. The Cascade River (leading to Cascade Pass), Goodell Creek, Bacon Creek, and Thornton Creek, along with their tributaries, are prime salmon-producing waters. Healthy salmon populations are the key to proper functioning of



Youth enjoying nature near Newbalem. — © BENJ DRUMMOND

most North Cascades' ecosystems. Salmon carcasses provide the nutrients and energy that support riparian forests along many of the rivers and streams in the North Cascades, including the Skagit River. Maintaining healthy forests in these riparian corridors keeps the rivers cool. Maintaining cool rivers ensures good salmon spawning areas and, ultimately, a healthier Puget Sound.

More than 20 species of mammals reside in these riparian areas. Carcasses of salmon are tugged up on the shores by bears, river otters, raccoons, bobcats, and coyotes. In succession, leftovers are tidied up by smaller animals such as skunks, squirrels, deer mice, and shrews. Ravens, crows, red-tailed hawks, and to a lesser degree even jays, ouzels, and winter wrens join in the feast. All living things, including birds, beetles, worms, bacteria and fungus, clean up the remains. Plants use the nutrients that are left in the soils of these forested riparian areas. A loss of any part of the system affects the whole. Retaining the whole is the language of an ecosystem. If the Forest Service decides to log these low-elevation valleys, for which they have very few long-term restrictions, the riparian areas and essential parts of the overall ecosystem could be damaged or destroyed.

Partner organizations supporting the American Alps Legacy Proposal believe the area can be best protected by the National Park System, with its conservation

continued on page 14





AMERICAN ALPS LEGACY PROPOSAL

What and why

Continued from page 13

“Our Proposal promotes what the North Cascades National Park Enabling Act failed to provide, completion of the North Cascades National Park.”

scientists and dedicated funds to maintain this prime area at its highest conservation level. Congress provides the Park Service with funds to carry on the science. In contrast, Congress charges the Forest Service with a multiple-use mandate and provides funds for forest silviculture to assure ample logs for the mills.

There is also a noteworthy scenic part of the American Alps Legacy Proposal. Some of the most spectacular and peerless mountain scenery in the United States is included in the Proposal. Several near-vertical peaks rise to 8,000 or 8,500 feet. Granitic, dramatic, rugged, and jagged! Most notable to visitors along Highway 20 are Liberty Bell Mountain and the Early Winters Peaks near Washington Pass. North of the Pass is the series of peaks collectively known as the Golden Horn, named after one of its most auspicious peaks. When Secretary of Interior Stuart Udall flew over the North Cascades in 1967 to check on its national park potential, he said this area of the North Cascades could be made into six different national parks.

Our Proposal promotes what the North Cascades National Park Enabling Act failed to provide, completion of the North Cas-



Stiletto Peak and Copper Creek from Copper Pass. —JIM SCARBOROUGH PHOTO

cades National Park. We have produced a final American Alps Legacy Proposal which is gaining the attention of national elected officials. Senate and House staff toured the Proposal area during the summer with American Alps project director, Jim Davis, and American Alps Advisory Committee co-chair, Jim Wickwire.

A significant proportion of the expenses for the American Alps Legacy Proposal have been contributed by NCCC. We support the American Alps campaign through your membership contributions and special donations to NCCC. Visit our website (www.northcascades.org) to make a donation or join NCCC.

It is a worthy cause, so please support it generously.

American Alps Legacy Proposal

Continued from page 12

So, where do we stand politically? As of early October, the American Alps Legacy Proposal has been endorsed by the Whatcom, Snohomish, and King County Councils (all but one councilman voting yes across all three councils). The Bellingham City Council (unanimous), Bellingham Mayor, and Whatcom County Executive all strongly support the effort. Numerous local businesses, conservation groups, and recreation groups support the American Alps proposal. There remain several pockets of opposition to the proposal (see above). However, national elected officials are starting to show serious interest in sponsoring the park expansion proposal. Stay tuned for breaking news. Be prepared to voice your opinion when the time is right.

Granite Falls motocross project still alive

By Bruce Barnbaum

The 75-acre set of seven motocross racing tracks four miles up the Mountain Loop Highway from Granite Falls refuses to die. It appears that the Snohomish County Planning and Development Services Department (PDS) keeps it on life support, despite its insurmountable problems.

More than a year ago PDS issued a determination of non-significance for the project. But when three appeals were filed, PDS asked for a month delay, then quickly removed the determination, saying that it had not received all necessary papers from the project proponent. (Makes you wonder how they could have put out their determination in favor of the project without all necessary papers being received.)

A year-long delay was requested by the proponents for the project and granted. Nothing new happened and another year-long delay was requested. PDS allowed three months. Now, new papers have been submitted, but no new analysis of key problems.

Noise is the biggest issue. Proponents offered a noise report based on “point sources” of noise, but motorcycles racing around a closed loop track produce “distributive noise” all along the route of travel. So far, PDS has ignored that obvious failing of the noise report.

The proponents claim that noise will be attenuated by a 25-foot-high earthen berm surrounding the entire project. According to their own papers, the berm will require 850,000 cubic yards of fill dirt (all dirt, no rock). They claim the material for the berm will come from “local construction sites.” PDS has ignored the obvious fact that in the past 10 years there have been few local construction sites to supply that amount of material, and there are no such sites on the planning books in the next 10 years to supply the needed material. The proponents have offered no timetable for building that noise-attenuating berm, and PDS has asked for none.

To build a berm of that size will require approximately 50,000 gravel truck-loads of dirt to be brought to the site. PDS has asked for no traffic study for that amount of truck traffic on a two-lane road.

The site of the project is atop an acknowledged critical aquifer-recharge area. Project consultants and PDS apparently see no conflict in locating this project, which will surely create problems with

gasoline and other spillage, not to mention human waste issues, atop an aquifer. PDS sees no environmental degradation with this project.

PDS sees no problem with cutting down 75 acres of carbon-sequestering trees to be replaced by 75 acres of carbon-emitting motorcycles. While there is talk nationwide and worldwide about the perils of climate change, nobody—certainly not PDS, nor the County Council, which can pass anti-carbon emitting laws—will do anything to stem our slide into permanent climate change.

PDS has not done its job of protecting its own citizens from the obvious degrada-

tions this project will cause. It apparently has no intention to change its ways now.

All signs point to a hearing soon in front of the Snohomish County Hearing Examiner on the need for a full EIS and on the merits of permitting this project. PDS will support this awful project. The Mountain Loop Conservancy (MLC) is spearheading the opposition. You can contribute to this battle by sending a check made out to MLC, and send it to PO Box 1097, Granite Falls, WA 98252. The MLC is a 501(c) 3 organization; all donations are tax deductible. Find them on the web at mtloopconservancy.org.



Headwaters, Baker River. —TOM HAMMOND PHOTO

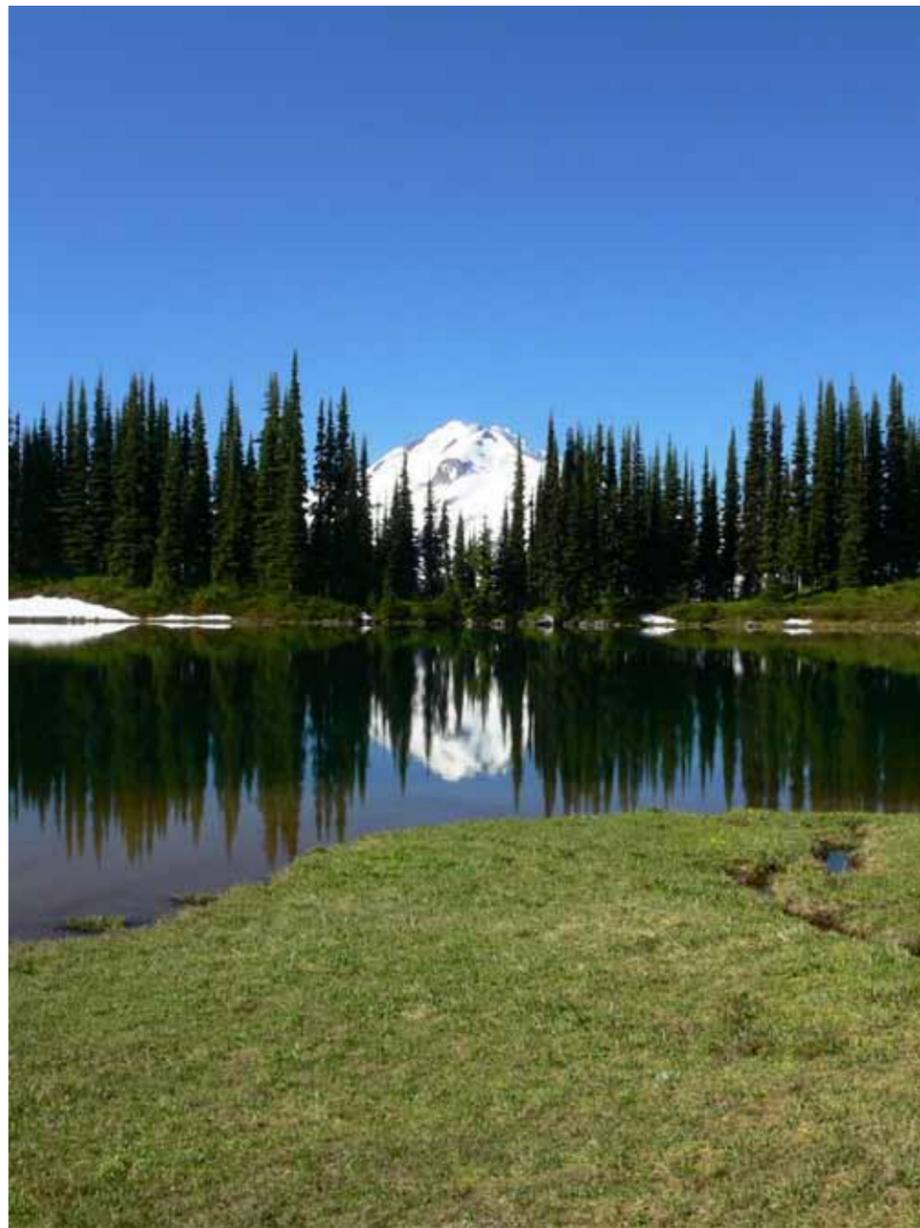
A Pilgrimage to Image Lake via Holden, and a tale of two mines

By Phil Fenner

It wasn't long ago that John McPhee was calling David Brower an "Archdruid" for his personal efforts to stop Kennecott from devastating the area around Image Lake in the Glacier Peak Wilderness with an open-pit copper mine. The legacy of that battle, and the current efforts to limit the damage from an earlier mining operation at Holden, were on my mind this summer as I backpacked from Holden to Image Lake, on a pilgrimage to some of the most spectacularly scenic country in the North Cascades.

Few if any places can compare to Image Lake for scenic beauty and deep wilderness isolation. DaKobed (Glacier Peak) is really our last Cascade wilderness volcano. We got our first look at it from the shoulder of Cloudy Peak on day two out of Holden. It remained in more or less continuous view as we traversed Miners Ridge toward Image Lake, crossing the former mining claim that was only relinquished in a land swap last year, to finally close this case permanently.

Why think of a trip here as a pilgrimage? How iconic is Image Lake? Take a look at the NCCC logo on page three of this journal. The fight to save this area from mining was a crystallizing force that led to the



We spent all morning just soaking up this exceptionally fine view of Glacier Peak reflected in Image Lake. —PHIL FENNER PHOTO

of the Glacier Peak Wilderness northward to the Skagit River and eastward around the upper end of Lake Chelan. The focus shifted northward later in the Park designation process, but the Glacier Peak Wilderness and the views from Image Lake remained the classic "post card views" used to promote a Park in the North Cascades.

Following notes in an old guidebook, we found the remains of several adits (test diggings) and structures along the Miners Ridge trail. One old cabin was still standing, full of rusty gear remnants, near a flat open area that was probably the helipad Kennecott would have used to access their claims. An old map showed dark grey squares on the slopes here, exceptions from wilderness, marking where the proposed open pit would have been dug. I said a few words of silent thanks to

those who came before me in the NCCC for fighting tooth and nail to stop this proposed project.

We climbed to the ridgetop above Image Lake on the shoulder of Plummer Mountain to look north into Canyon Creek. As Rowland Tabor aptly described it in Routes

and Rocks, the scenery was "stupendous." We were very lucky with the weather, and due to the late spring this year the wildflowers were more like what you might expect in June of a more typical year. And true to the wilderness experiences of Harvey Manning as he wrote about them in *The Wild Cascades: Forgotten Parkland*, we were visited by the classic Cascades "plague of flies." We also were nearly hit by a couple of other flying objects (see sidebar).

We met a few other hardy souls willing to make the trek to Image, and after chatting with one he revealed himself to be an NCCC member from California, who expressed his heartfelt thanks to us for continuing to promote principled conservation in the Cascades. It's always great to know our efforts are appreciated in the wider world!

On the return trip, we hoofed it up to the ridge above Lyman Lake to get a view of Upper Lyman. New snow still blanketed the Lyman Glacier at all but its lower-most terminus. Last winter was certainly good news for glaciers.

On the way back we spent a day at Holden Village. I checked in with Holden Village's manager of public works, Chris Shultz, who was kind enough to take some time out of his busy schedule to update me on the remediation project there. Often incorrectly called a "clean-up," this huge project is starting up now. The goal is to contain the waste from a 20-year mining operation that ended in the mid 1950s. The waste has been sitting there ever since, and Railroad Creek has suffered from acid leachate and bed cementation to the point that it's essentially devoid of life below the mine.

I've written before on the Holden Mine problem in *TWC** and lots of background information is available on the web. It's the biggest single environmental disaster area in the North Cascades. A low-grade copper deposit was extracted and concentrated, very similar to what was going to be mined out of the open pit near Image Lake, and similar also to what's now proposed for pristine areas like the headwaters of rivers feeding Alaska's Bristol Bay (the "Pebble Mine" you may have heard about). Other comparables are the areas around Chancellor in the Harts Pass area (the Azurite Mine, also subject to remediation).

Things are well under way at Holden now. Chris explained that Alternative 14 is the "actionable alternative," meaning during the 2013 and 2014 summer seasons, Holden Village will only house remedia-

tion workers and Holden staff, no guests. "Work camps" will be held to rebuild the power and water infrastructure, taking advantage of the two summers without guests. These improvements will include a new water main, a "purple pipe" for fire protection, and burying the power lines.

The soccer field next to the Holden School has been transformed into a parking area for project vehicles and portable offices. A very large piece of equipment on tracks 10 feet apart had gone through the Village earlier the day we went through, requiring power lines to be raised to let it pass. Workers were seen cutting trees along the road, walking about the Village in orange vests, and waiting by the Lucerne dock for the boat.

Holden Village anticipates having a new hydro plant once the project is done. Much more power will be needed for water treatment pumps after the two-year remediation phase, and so a new "run of the river" hydro facility will be built along Railroad Creek itself, below the village, supplanting the antique hydro system on Copper Creek.

A logging team is on site now, and extensive tree removal will be necessary for the remediation, for several aspects:

- Twenty-seven turnouts will be added to the road to allow heavy equipment to move in both directions during the two summers.
- Railroad Creek itself is planned to be relocated several feet toward the Village,

to bypass the tailings. The current creek bed will then be a collection trench for water from the tailings to be treated.

- The water treatment area below the lower tailings pile will have to be cleared of trees.
- A new "bypass" road will be built, including a new bridge crossing Railroad Creek below the lower tailings, allowing access to the south side of the creek where the remediation work will be done, without going directly through the Village to the only bridge currently in place, above the Village.
- Holden Village will have the option to purchase the timber being cut at a reduced rate.

One issue of concern is simply the source of all the crushed rock needed to build the new retaining walls, caps, and treatment facilities. Bringing all that material in from down-lake has been ruled out as too expensive, so a series of new quarries and gravel pits will be dug around Holden, many right by the access road, ironically because of the current Roadless Area boundary just a short way from the road on the north side of the valley.

Continued on page 18

This could have been the scene around Image Lake – tons of mine tailings await remediation near Holden Village. —PHIL FENNER PHOTO



The land along the Railroad Creek road, from the road northward to the Roadless Area boundary, can be dug-up for crushed rock without changing the administrative Roadless Area boundary, so rather than “hide” the quarries back behind a screen of trees, they will be in full view of all the visitors. Perhaps that’s for the better, if it draws attention to the impacts of trying to remediate a disaster like this — hiding the impacts might make the project appear more benign than it is. One serious loss will be some old cedars along the creek below the Village. Luckily the rest of the trees slated to be cut are not so large or unique for the area.

In the “Portal Museum” of mining artifacts, now housed in the Village Center, I saw a sign totaling the value of all the minerals extracted during the mining — \$100 million. The sign didn’t say in what year’s dollars that valuation was made. The remediation will cost an estimated at \$107 million in current dollars. According to Chris, it’s all coming from the successor to the company that did the mining, Rio Tinto (meaning “colored river” — from a river in Spain that has run red from acid mine drainage since antiquity from... you guessed it... copper mining). I heard it said that relative to Rio Tinto’s annual budget, \$107M isn’t all that much, really.

How will it all turn out? After two years of work, starting in 2015, the water quality downstream and the works in place to retain the tailings will be monitored for

five years, then any additional work required will take place beginning in 2020. This compromise was negotiated partly to reduce the impact on the Holden Village operation. The good news is that after that five-year evaluation period, Rio Tinto will not be off the hook! If more work is needed, they will continue to be liable until standards for air and water quality are met, Chris said. Let’s hope he’s right about that.

We expect to be observing the remediation process and the follow-up monitoring. Any N3C members who go through Holden in the coming years are invited send their reports to ncccinfo@northcascades.org.

And I noticed in a glass display case there’s a copy of none other than an old edition of *The Wild Cascades* from the 60s! NCCC has been advocating for the best outcome for the environment around Holden for quite some time, it seems. Once again I was reminded of how much we all owe NCCC’s elders for stopping the open pit targeted for Image Lake.

HIKERS NOTE that the Copper Basin and upper end of the Railroad Creek trails are closed, and may remain so for the duration of the remediation work.

*See “The Holden Mine Problem,” Spring 2009 issue of *The Wild Cascades*, p. 4, at http://www.northcascades.org/public_html/TWC_Spring_09_web.pdf

Top guns in deep wilderness

We were in for a shock as we crossed the steep remnant snowfields between Cloudy and Suiattle Passes. A pair of fighter jets went screaming up Agnes Creek valley and did a final vertical maneuver to clear the ridge, just a few meters overhead. The noise was deafening. After checking into the situation, the consensus of opinion seemed to be that there was no point in complaining. Even if we had the serial numbers on the aircraft, homeland security would trump any concern for wilderness values.

NCCC, Sierra Club comment on Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest Plan

By Karl Forsgaard

The comment period on the “Proposed Action” phase of the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest (OWNF) Plan Revision ended September 28. In addition to their comment letters, the Sierra Club and NCCC jointly submitted a map of proposed wilderness. The Forest Plan Revision is the first time in decades that the Forest Service will make wilderness recommendations forestwide. Unfortunately, the Proposed Action’s recommendations were far too small, omitting any roadless areas with trails currently used by off-road vehicles such as motorcycles, ATVs and 4x4s. The Sierra Club/NCCC map proposes major additions to the Proposed Action’s wilderness recommendations, including

the Teanaway, Mad River and Chelan-Sawtooth areas which are highly worthy of wilderness protection.

NCCC also reminded the Forest Service that it “should carefully consider recommending lands for addition to North Cascades National Park, such as the Golden Horn area adjacent to the Park. This Park recommendation is now embodied in our American Alps campaign, and is consistent with the wilderness recommendations made in the Sierra Club/N3C map for the Golden Horn / Skagit Headwaters and Liberty Bell roadless areas.”

The Sierra Club and NCCC letters found the Proposed Action to be “weak on protection of roadless lands, wilder-

ness, quiet recreation, and old-growth forests. Its emphasis on flexibility and vegetation management returns us to an era of increased logging and threatens the Northwest Forest Plan and the long-term survival of many native species.” We also supported the Proposed Action’s protection of Wild and Scenic Rivers.

The next public comment opportunity on the Forest Plan Revision will be the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS), anticipated to be released next summer. The separate DEIS for the OWNF Travel Management Plan, which will designate which trails are open to off-road vehicles and which to hikers, bicycles and horses only, should appear later this fall.

Roadless Rule upheld — huge win for conservation

By Tom Hammond

On Friday, October 21, 2011, the 10th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals backed the 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule after lawyers for the state of Wyoming and the Colorado Mining Association contended it was a violation of the law.

The Rule provides protection for nearly two million acres of wild national forests in Washington and nearly 60 million acres around the country. The Court upheld the Rule’s provisions protecting Roadless Areas from road building and associated “development” favored by extractive industries. The Rule has been under attack in various industry appeals across the country for almost a decade, but this influential decision ensures that the Roadless Rule is now national policy.

The Roadless Rule was put in place by the Clinton administration in 2001, not long before George W. Bush took office as president. The Rule followed more than two years of public hearings and 1.6 million comments.



Cabin from the “Glacier Peak Mines” operation of Kennicott Copper, remaining from prospects of a 372-acre open pit mine on Miners Ridge, dating back to the 50s.

—PHIL FENNER PHOTO

NORTH CASCADES CONSERVATION COUNCIL

Be part of the leadership of a vibrant grassroots network of advocates for protection of unique lands, waters, plant life, and wilderness of the North Cascades.

Yes! I want to support North Cascades Conservation Council’s efforts working on many fronts to establish new wilderness, defend our forests, support wildlife conservation and keystone species, and promote sound conservation recreational use.



If you love our great North Cascades wilderness as much as we do, support the NCCC with a generous IRS tax-deductible contribution in the amount of:

\$10 Living lightly/student \$30 \$50 \$100

\$250 \$500 \$1000 Other

I would like to volunteer. Contact me.

Please send me occasional action alerts by email.

Contributions include membership and subscription to NCCC’s journal, *The Wild Cascades*. NCCC is a 501 (c)(3) organization. All donations are tax deductible.

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Phone _____
Email _____

Send your check or money order and this form to:
Laura Zalesky, North Cascades Conservation Council,
14905 Bothell Everett Hwy #207, Mill Creek, WA 98012.
You may also send in your contribution by internet logging
into an account at www.northcascades.org

THE WILD CASCADES

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

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

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

*You're
invited!*



NCCC Membership Event

**December 9, 2011
6 to 9 p.m.**

**The Mountaineers
Goodman B**

**7700 Sandpoint Way NE
Seattle**



*Lupine blooms amid snow and boulders,
Kulshan seen beyond.
—TOM HAMMOND PHOTO*