

# THE WILD CASCADES

THE JOURNAL OF THE NORTH CASCADES CONSERVATION COUNCIL

WINTER 2017

IN MEMORIAM

*Polly Dyer*

*Pages 12 – 14*

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### Membership application

FRONT: "Middle Fork", a sculpture by John Grade on display in the lobby of the Seattle Art Museum. Read more on page 18. —RON BLUNT PHOTO

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## The Wild Cascades

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### *Journal of the North Cascades Conservation Council*

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

Over the past half century N3C has led or participated in campaigns to create the North Cascades National Park Complex, Glacier Peak Wilderness, and other units of the National Wilderness System from the W.O. Douglas Wilderness north to the Alpine Lakes Wilderness, the Henry M. Jackson Wilderness, the Chelan-Sawtooth Wilderness, the Wild Sky Wilderness and others. Among its most dramatic victories has been working with British Columbia allies to block the raising of Ross Dam, which would have drowned Big Beaver Valley.

N3C is supported by member dues and private donations. These contributions support the full range of the Council's activities, including publication of *The Wild Cascades*. As a 501(c)(3) organization, all contributions are fully tax deductible to the extent allowed by law. Membership dues for one year are: Living Lightly/Student \$10; Individual \$30; Family \$50; Sustaining \$100.

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NORTH CASCADES CONSERVATION COUNCIL

Founded in 1957

SEATTLE, WASHINGTON

## THE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

WINTER 2017

The passing of Polly Dyer means all of the original members of the board of the North Cascades Conservation Council are no longer with us. Fortunately for us, their legacy lives on, not just in the form of the N3C, but more importantly in hundreds of thousands of acres of protected land: Wilderness that is so very critical to a healthy ecosystem and to the lives and livelihoods of all of us in the region. I knew when I got into this "conservation" thing that the human dynamic of working with so many people in their 70s through 90s would mean I'd see many of them go if I stayed on the board long enough. Not only am I still on the board, I'm the president for the passing of an era. It is at the same time humbling and disconcerting. There is no way I can match the efforts of Patrick Goldsworthy or Betty Manning, much less Polly. 2017 marks the 60th anniversary of the N3C, and we find the next generation of conservationists faces many of the same challenges, including how to BE the next generation of conservationists. The staying power of Polly and her mates is a remarkable testament to acting with passion. They serve as beacons at a time when it appears there are the most severe

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*This is a time to  
come together  
and make our  
voices heard  
through action.*

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of storm clouds on all horizons. Sixty years of grassroots advocacy is a testament to the importance of the mission of the N3C and speaks well of the board and membership.

The appointment of a blatant anti-science oil industry advocate to head the EPA gives us ample opportunity to do a lot more than pause, or wring our hands, or hold our heads in the old "woe is me" stance! No, this is a time to come together and make our voices heard through action.

Since the election, I've been bombarded by solicitations, by phone, in the mail and in email to send money to save the environment. I can assure you that the N3C will not engage in such activity. Our mission has never been to fundraise. Our mission is to advocate for the preservation of Wilderness values across the North Cascades, and yes, in honor of Polly, the Olympics too. As you will see at the center of this edition, we will resist the forces that prioritize resource extraction.

How valuable is Wilderness? Consider this: the love of Wilderness and the use of Wilderness was covered in an article in the *Columbian* about activity in the Trapper Creek Wilderness Area (only 5,969 acres) of the Gifford Pinchot National Forest in a very "red" portion of the state. USFS policy calls for fewer than 2,200 "recreation visitor days" in a year, a number exceeded every year since 2006, with an average of 2,997 and a peak of 3,578 in 2015. And of course not everyone registers, so these numbers don't accurately reflect visitation. Even in areas where people rally and rail against Wilderness, we see huge demand and use.

If you choose to engage in advocacy for Wilderness and the value of public lands, please consider writing letters to all of your representatives, and the heads of various departments in support of habitat, conservation and science. Not once, but pretty

CONTINUED  
ON PAGE 6



# N3C Actions

MAY 2016  
to JANUARY 2017

*Advocacy carried out by  
dedicated N3C volunteers  
in the last nine months to  
protect and preserve the  
North Cascades lands,  
waters, plants, and wildlife.*



## EXPANDING, ESTABLISHING, AND PROTECTING WILDERNESS AREAS

*Why it matters: federal land designation as Wilderness and Park is the gold standard of ecosystem protection, precluding most damaging industrial and commercial exploitation.*

- Submitted extensive comments on the proposal for Talapus Lake Trail Reconstruction near Snoqualmie Pass in the Alpine Lakes Wilderness. N3C comments resulted in the elimination of helicopters and motorized rock drills for the reconstruction work and replacement of a proposed steel bridge with an environmentally appropriate timber one.
- Hosted an N3C info table at the Burke Museum during the opening of Braided River Books' *Wild Nearby* exhibit.
- Presented public lecture on North Cascades Glaciers at the Burke Museum.
- Attend public workshop sponsored by the Icicle Work Group (IWG) reviewing working plans for increased water withdrawal from the Alpine Lakes Wilderness.
- Participated in an outing to Eight Mile Lake in the Alpine Lakes Wilderness sponsored by the IWG as part of their continuing attempt to increase water withdrawal.



## PROMOTING ENVIRONMENTALLY SOUND RECREATION IN WILD AREAS

*Why it matters: balancing access with economics and Wilderness preservation, we evaluate motorized use and places where it needs to be limited to reduce land impacts and recurring road repair costs.*

- Submitted comments to the Okanogan–Wenatchee Nation Forest (OWNF) on The Motorized Travel Management draft Environmental Assessment (EA).
- Attended annual conference and rejoined the Federation of Western Outdoor Clubs (FWOC).
- Signed joint letter to Congress supporting permanent authorization of the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF).
- Signed joint letter supporting the Morningstar land exchange with the Department of Natural Resources (DNR).
- Attended scoping meeting for proposed DNR recreational plan. Two N3C board members were appointed to the planning committee for the Morningstar area.
- With Seattle City Light (SCL), North Cascades Institute, and the National Park Service, attended five-year review of FERC Skagit River Project License #532. Approved continued environmental education mission of NCI for next five years.
- Attended a public meeting with Forest Service Region 6 (Pacific NW) leadership discussing collaborative efforts between FS & NGOs on recreational access issues.



## PROTECTING ANCIENT FORESTS AND PROMOTING RESPONSIBLE FOREST MANAGEMENT

**Why it matters:** like real estate, they're just not making ancient forest anymore. We seek to restore watersheds and fisheries damaged from decades of heavy logging and road building and protect significant forests from degradation.

- ✓ Provided critical comment opposing timber thinning on the Mission Restoration Project in the OWNF Methow District.
- ✓ Commented on the Greenwater Access and Travel Management Project (ATM) draft EA for the Snoqualmie District of the Mount Baker Snoqualmie National Forest (MBSNF), the second ATM issued under the Sustainable Roads Strategy. N3C advocated withdrawal and rewriting of the ATM to reflect the reduced mileage of roads which may be maintained with the available budget.
- ✓ Signed joint letter to the US Forest Service (USFS) encouraging Travel Analysis Reports prior to the NEPA process of "Right-sizing" the Forest Service road system.
- ✓ Signed joint letter containing scoping comments on proposed expansion of the Swen Larson Quarry in the MBSNF.
- ✓ Attended public field trip visiting sites of proposed Stillaguamish Vegetation Management Plan (i.e. timber thinning) in the MBSNF Darrington Ranger District.

- ✓ Met with Snohomish County Executive Dave Somers to discuss the Singletary Timber Sale on DNR land adjacent to Wallace Falls State Park. Signed joint letter noting the sale's negative impact on new park hiking trails. In response, the County & DNR have proposed removing 25 acres from the sale, protecting the Wallace Fall State Parks trails.
- ✓ Signed joint letter to the Senate/ House conferees opposing inclusion of S-1694 (promoting the Yakima Integrated Plan) in the Energy Policy Modernization Bill S-2012.
- ✓ Signed joint letter to U.S. House and Senate members urging that changes to Hydro Power Relicensing Provisions be dropped from The Energy Policy Modernization Bill S-2012. (Because Congress failed to vote on the final bill before the end of the session, the proposed legislation did not become law.)



## PROTECTING WILDLIFE AND HABITAT

**Why it matters:** from microscopic fungi to top predators, the wilderness ecosystem's living members are interdependent, so keeping viable populations of each species is essential to preserve the ecosystem for future generations.

- ✓ Signed joint letter with Wilderness Watch opposing USFS plans to use helicopters to capture and collar mountain goats in the Glacier Peak Wilderness.
- ✓ Submitted comments recommending greater details be provided in the SCL proposal to dredge cobbles in the Skagit River below the hydroelectric tailrace.
- ✓ Signed joint letter with the Washington Forest Law Center to the Washington State Fish and Wildlife Agency supporting continued listing of the Marbled Murrelet as a state endangered species.
- ✓ Submitted comments to North Cascades NP on the Grizzly Bear Reintroduction EIS, supporting a modified Alternative D.
- ✓ Contributed \$4,000 to the Skagit Environmental Endowment Commission for a study of the mineral potential in the headwaters of the Skagit River drainage east of Ross Lake, to prepare to defend the area against prospecting and mining.

60 Years  
1957-2017



**North Cascades Conservation Council**

**Celebrating our 60th anniversary!**

# Online backcountry permit reservations program begins



Starting March 15, hikers to popular backcountry areas within the North Cascades National Park Service Complex can reserve their permits online at *pay.gov*. A \$20 cost-recovery fee will be charged for the application. Reservation requests can be submitted from March 15 to May 15 for camping between May 15 and September 30. For early May trips, reservations must be submitted at least seven days in advance. After March 31, all reservations are to be processed in the order received.

Advance reservations must be converted to a backcountry permit before the start of the trip. Permits must be picked up by 11 am of the trip start date or the reservation will be cancelled and the sites made available to other visitors.

For hikes or climbs before or after these dates, first-come, first-serve permits must be obtained in person at a park visitor or information center. Throughout the season, 40 percent of the campsite permits will still be available as walkups.

The NPS is instituting this pilot program because increased backcountry visitation means walk-up permits have become difficult to obtain in areas of the park such as Pelton Basin and Copper Ridge camps. For those who like to plan ahead – and those who are reluctant to plan trips to popular areas because they might show up with gear only to find all the permits gone already – this is a good thing.

Similar systems are being implemented throughout the NPS system as visitation increases. The approach works well for Mount Rainier National Park.

While N3C appreciates the desire to simply go to wild places to be there, we recognize and agree with the need to preserve the very character of wildness that this permit system seeks to maintain...and the frustration it is intended to prevent.

*High camp on Kulshan Mount Baker Wilderness Area. Similar full camp scenes inside the Park occur every summer. © Tom Hammond*

## President's Report

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

much constantly for the next four years. Consider donating your most special gift of all: your time and energy. N3C could always use more people ground-truthing, attending community meetings (say, to discuss clearcutting a huge swath along the Sauk River pretty much from Barlow Pass to near the confluence of the White Chuck River).

If you, like me, have a fulltime job and a fulltime life, then monetary donations may be your next best form of advocacy. Such donations are always welcomed and most appreciated. Be assured the N3C uses such funds for conservation-focused action. I think we're going to have a bit of action coming up...

Be well, and be good to yourselves, your families, your neighbors and everyone you meet.

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## Singletary timber sale saga continues

After a seemingly unending series of twists and turns, ups and downs, the Singletary timber sale on state Department of Natural Resources-managed, Snohomish County-owned lands just east of Wallace Falls State Park still hangs in the balance.

After being approved by the state Board of Natural Resources—and after N3C met with County Executive Dave Somers and signed a joint letter noting the sale's negative impact on new park hiking trails—Snohomish County has requested a reconveyance of at least 25 acres of the sale area back into County management (it is actually County land currently managed by DNR) to protect new trails scheduled to be built there from being clearcut, and to protect the views of Wallace Falls.

As this issue of *TWC* goes to press, DNR has taken the very unusual step of pulling this approved sale from the auction block because of Snohomish County's request. This will hopefully give some time to find a solution to protect part of the sale area from cutting. The forest here still hangs in the balance, but its doom seemed certain just a few days ago. Look for a full report in the next *Wild Cascades*.



## We will resist

see pages 10-11

*Photo—John Warth, taken in the 1960s. His typewritten caption says "Sign on bank of N. Fork Sauk River, where timber has been cut creating a fire hazard."*

# David Brower remembered

By Dave Fluharty



N3C board members Patrick Goldsworthy, Dave Fluharty, Dick Brooks and Dave Brower.  
—Photo from the Patrick Goldsworthy collection

David Brower was a stalwart supporter and inspiration for N3C over the history of our organization. His contributions as a film maker, publicist and advisor are myriad and loom large in our successes. As important as he was to our organization, the full sweep of his influence on growing the preservation and environmental movements in the United States and abroad is amazing. Brower tells his side of the story in three volumes that are autobiographical. These volumes are a must read for anyone who wants to understand the history of environmental protection:

- *For Earth's Sake: the Life and Times of David Brower* (Peregrine Smith, 1990).
- *Work in Progress* (Peregrine Smith, 1991)
- *Let the Mountains Talk, Let the Rivers Run: a Call to Those Who Would Save the Earth* (with Steve Chappell; Harper-Collins West, 1995)

Since Brower's passing in 2000, two people who knew him well have stepped forward to provide perspectives on Brower's life and some of the controversies that surrounded his departure from the Sierra Club and formation of Friends of the Earth and later Earth Island Institute. *David Brower: The Making of the Environmental Movement* by Tom Turner and published by University of California Press, Berkeley in 2015 speaks to Brower's broad impacts and accomplishments. Robert Wyss wrote *The Man Who Built the Sierra Club: A Life of David Brower* published by Columbia University Press, New York in 2016 to bet-

ter document and explain the intricacies of Brower's involvement with the Sierra Club. Each well-researched and written book should appeal to those who were on the wild ride of the rise of preservation and environmentalism starting in the 1950s. Younger readers are advised to turn from the electronic to print medium in order to appreciate how far we have come in terms of organizing as a movement – and how far we have to go.

The two authors provide a sympathetic yet critical look at Brower's great strengths and minor weaknesses. I find it interesting that many of the hardliners who bickered with Brower's impatience, fiscal irresponsibility and other foibles have come, in retrospect, to an appreciation of the significance and influence that Brower exerted on the Sierra Club and the planet. Brower was taller, stronger, more forceful and more compelling than most of us can ever hope to be but he always accepted us for who we are and encouraged us to do our best. Read and be inspired. Read and be reinvigorated.

*"Polite conservationists leave no mark  
save the scars upon the Earth that  
could have been prevented had they  
stood their ground."*

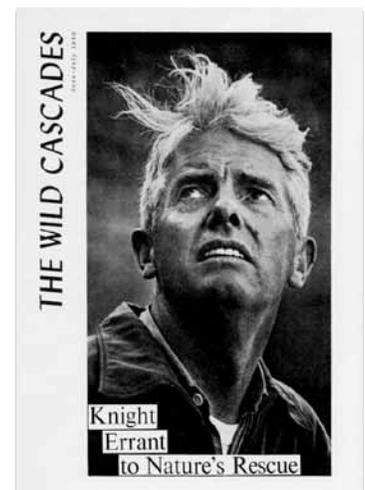
— David Brower



## Protecting Canada lynx in Washington State

*Courtesy the Western  
Environmental Law Center*

The Canada lynx is listed as a threatened species under the Washington state equivalent of the Endangered Species Act. After the state population of these rare cats fell to an estimated 54 individuals, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife proposed to uplist the animal from threatened to endangered, an action that would make lynx eligible for state recovery actions to restore populations to healthy levels, and would add a layer of protection in case lawmakers ever weaken the federal ESA, or remove the Canada lynx from the federal list of threatened species. Recently the Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission unanimously voted to uplist the Canada lynx to endangered status under Washington state law. Although we are saddened that Canada lynx have declined to the point where this is necessary, we wholeheartedly applaud the Commission for recognizing that the lynx needs and deserves enhanced protections in Washington.





The National Park Service and the Fish and Wildlife Service have released a long-awaited draft Environmental Impact Statement on reintroducing grizzly bears to the North Cascades.

Most readers of *The Wild Cascades* will know that grizzly bears were extirpated from the Cascades over the course of the 19th and early 20th centuries. Their natural range apparently did not extend to the Olympic peninsula or the Puget Sound lowlands but populations appear to have been numerous in the Cascades and eastern Washington.

Grizzly bears are well adapted to environments like the North Cascades where they can eat whatever they can find during the warmer months and den up during the lean winters. The extensive protected areas of the Cascades, including the National Park and a number of Wilderness areas, mean that there is a lot of good habitat, habitat that many believe could easily support a population of grizzly bears once again.

The idea of bringing grizzlies back to the Cascades has been talked about for a long time. This EIS is the first concrete step toward making it happen. Bears would be captured in other areas where populations are still healthy, and transported to and released into the Cascades. A prime candidate for a "source population" is the Northern Continental Divide ecosystem (NCDE), basically the northernmost part of the Rocky mountains in the U.S., and extending into Canada. Glacier National Park, the Bob Marshall Wilderness and others are part of the NCDE.

Bears in the NCDE are not salmon eaters, and their habitat is in many ways similar to the Cascades. There are believed to be a thousand or more bears in this population, so removing some to release in the Cascades shouldn't produce much in the way of bad effects there. It is possible that some bears could also be

## Draft EIS released for grizzly bear reintroduction to the Cascades

transported from areas in southern British Columbia closer to the Cascades. Wells Grey Provincial Park is a logical candidate, where some bears do not have access to salmon.

The EIS offers up four alternatives. "A" is do nothing, "B" is proceed very slowly, "C" is go a little faster, and "D" would move the most bears, up to eight per year, and keep moving them in for a number of years.

N3C has written in support of Alternative D, the most intensive alternative. With over two million acres of potential habitat, N3C believes that if the decision is made to move ahead with reintroduction (and we believe it should be) as many bears as possible should be released, as quickly as possible. If too few bears are released, there is a danger that they would spread out so far and wide that they would be unlikely

to find each other in such a vast landscape, with obvious implications for establishing a self-sustaining population.

If bears are to be reintroduced, it needs to be done in full measure. Tranquilizing,

moving and releasing such formidable creatures is of course a highly specialized skill, and there are limits as to how many animals could be moved in a season. N3C hopes that a go-slow approach is not chosen. A determined, vigorous effort seems to offer the best chances of success.

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*"If the decision is made to move ahead with reintroduction...as many bears as possible should be released, as quickly as possible."*

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In February, the NPS is hosting public open houses to inform people about the EIS and solicit comments. A decision could come later in 2017, a decision that we hope will lead to bears returning home to the Cascades.



E.M. Anderson '89 from photo by T. Christie, Times/PI.



## The Chilliwack River: *Salmon in the Cascades*

Grizzly bears love salmon. They don't need salmon, but they will eat it if they can. Unfortunately there are few places in the Cascades where salmon can swim far enough into the mountains for reintroduced grizzly bears to be able to feed on them in any real quantity.

Some salmon and bull trout ascend the North Fork Skykomish into the Wild Sky Wilderness, climbing as high as Deer Falls, elevation 2100 feet and just five miles from the crest. But spawning habitat is limited, and numbers are small.

The Skagit has a number of salmon runs, but most spawning areas are far downstream from where bears are likely to live. Bacon Creek, above Marblemount,

seems to have good runs, but proximity to roads could be a problem. Glacial rivers such as the Cascade, Suiattle and Whitechuck are not very good salmon spawning habitat, although salmon can swim up through them and spawn in clear tributaries such as lower Downey Creek. But for the most part, salmon habitat seems to end about where most roads end.

One exception to this is the Chilliwack River, which flows north from the north unit of the North Cascades National Park and into Chilliwack Lake, just north of the US-Canada border. From there the Chilliwack River flows north and west about 20 miles to the Fraser River.

N3C member Jim Scarborough observed and photographed sockeye salmon in the Chilliwack a few years ago. Chilliwack salmon have to run a gauntlet of agricultural runoff in the lower river, and the reach of spawning habitat in the National Park above Chilliwack Lake is not very extensive. But it is high quality, and most importantly there are no roads and few people. Here, at least, is a place where reintroduced grizzly bears may be able to enjoy the occasional meal of salmon.

—Photo Jim Scarborough



Wild places like this remind us why we must continue to resist their exploitation.

# We will resist any privatization of public land

We support the courageous National Park Service employees who are standing up to the ban on public communication and other public employees speaking out for truth, the rule of law, and the public good. We stand with those fighting to protect our wild lands unimpaired and for clean water and air and against the corporate greed that is fast destroying our planet.

We've been through dark moments before. Remember James Watt, Ronald Reagan's first Interior Secretary? He sought to upend public land policies for the direct benefit of gas, mining, logging, and ranching interests, made wholesale attempts to sell off public lands, proposed zero funding for new land acquisitions, and pursued long-term lease agreements for national park lands and wilderness areas for coal, oil, gas, and mineral development. NC3 and many other conservationists angered by his actions helped organize resistance and ignite public resentment until he resigned in 1983.

N3C's darkest hour was a long one. Resistance to the Kennecott Copper Company's plans to open-pit mine at Miner's Ridge in the Glacier Peak Wilderness spanned decades. Not until the price of copper fell were plans shelved. Tactics of vigilance learned and applied during those years may be needed again today.

The list of threats looming today is long: selling off the public lands; logging, mining, drilling and roadbuilding galore;

and abolishing or defanging the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Endangered Species Act. Scott Pruitt, a climate change and science denier from Oklahoma, is the new EPA head. Two of the named appointments to the EPA transition are from our very own state—Senator Doug Ericksen (R-Ferndale) and Don Benton (former R senator from Vancouver). Both have voted against environmental concerns at every turn and believe industry should self-regulate.

We urge our members to speak out against the new administration's actions that would accelerate global warming, sell off our public lands to the highest bidder, silence scientists, and deny future generations their right to enjoy our planet unimpaired. This will be a long, difficult fight, so get out into the wilderness to sustain joy and hope and remind yourself what we are fighting for. But then come back to the struggle. Call your representatives. Sign petitions. Take to the streets. Together, we will resist.

*Top right: The Seattle women's march had an environmental contingent. Phil Fenner photo.*

*Middle and lower right: Former N3C board member John Warth, who passed away last fall, used his camera to document private properties that infringed upon public lands like this Entiat subdivision within the national forest boundaries, and the Conifer Basketball Camp, organized by Western Washington University basketball coach Chuck Randall and held on a private inholding in the Snoqualmie National Forest at Snoqualmie Pass.*

*Left: Arnica and lupine carpet the moraines below Kulshan. © Tom Hammond*

*Clearcut photo, Phil Fenner.*



In Memoriam

# Polly Dyer

1920–2016

**P**olly Dyer passed away November 20, 2016, at the age of 96. She was the last surviving founding member of the North Cascades Conservation Council and, like all of the original members, had a formidable resume of conservation accomplishments.

If you would like to join Polly's family and friends in a celebration of her life, save June 3, 1:00 p.m., Mountaineers Program Center, Magnuson Park on your calendar. Organizers hope to make this an event Polly would enjoy coming to – family, friends getting together and having a good time. A program will celebrate the many aspects of her passion for wilderness conservation, wild animals, art, opera, biking, investment club, and jazzercise. Refreshments and time to talk will follow.

*Polly, we already miss you!*

## POLLY DYER: A Bio of Sorts

(Submitted by Polly for the Spring 2001 *Wild Cascades* feature introducing N3C board members)

I grew up living all around due to Coast Guard dad assignments: Seattle, New York City, Connecticut, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Florida, and in 1940, Ketchikan, Alaska.

- 1945: Met a young fellow wearing a red hunter's hat (but not a hunter) with a pin, "Rock Climbers, Sierra Club" on Deer Mt. above Ketchikan. Few months later, John A. Dyer and Polly Tomkiel were wed. Almost first thing, Polly joined the Sierra Club.
- 1950: Moved to Washington State, following three years in Berkeley, and hiking in the Sierra wild lands. Joined The Mountaineers, both Dyers on its Conservation Committee. Knowing shorthand, Polly drafted to be the Secretary; later, the



Top: Polly at the 50th anniversary Wilderness Conference in 2014. Photo: Phil Fenner. Bottom: Polly in the documentary "Beach Hike" (viewable on YouTube).

Chair. Major Project: Trying to persuade the F.S. to establish a Glacier Peak Wilderness Area.

- 1955: With Phil & Laura Zalesky backpacked to see the east side of the Glacier Peak area. End of hike at Stehekin led to Jane & Grant McConnell,

he a political science professor, who subsequently told us a single-purpose organization was more likely to achieve wilderness around Glacier Peak and North Cascades.

- 1957: The Mountaineers' Zaleskys, Goldsworthy, P. Dyer, and many others, going in with proposed by-laws, convened a meeting of Northwest member clubs of the Federation of Western Outdoor Clubs in Mazama's clubroom in Portland. Eureka!! The NORTH CASCADES CONSERVATION COUNCIL was created.

(And the rest of Polly's story, summarized from the excellent article about Polly on [historylink.org/File/9673](http://historylink.org/File/9673))

- 1957: Testified before the Senate Interior and Insular Affairs Committee on the proposed Wilderness Act.
- 1970: Earned a degree in geography from the UW, began graduate studies.
- 1974-94: Served as Public Services Coordinator, and later as Continuing Environmental Education Director, for the UW Institute for Environmental Studies (now called Program on the Environment).
- 1974: Appointed citizen member of the first state Forest Practices Commission by Governor Dan Evans. Served until 1979.
- 1970s: Served on planning committees for the U.S. Forest Service that shaped land use in Chelan, Snoqualmie, and Wenatchee National Forests.
- 1979: Honored with the Washington Environmental Council's environmental protection award.
- 1998: Honored by the Washington League of Women Voters for her longtime contributions to good government.
- 2001: Honored as an Environmental Hero by the Washington Environmental Council.
- 2010: Seattle Mayor Mike McGinn declares February 13 Polly Dyer Day in honor of her 90th birthday. Honored for 50+ years of leadership by then-U.S. Congressman Jay Inslee in a statement to the U.S. House of Representatives.
- 2014: Awarded an Honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters by Western Washington University during the March 22 winter commencement ceremony. Received standing ovation while attending the fall Conference celebrating



the 50th anniversary of the Wilderness Act in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

## Tributes to Polly

### Karl Forsgaard

Polly Dyer is one of my heroes. She was a powerful and effective advocate for wilderness, National Parks and other causes. Everybody loved Polly, and she lived a long and happy life.

Polly was a co-founder of North Cascades Conservation Council and served on its Board for almost 60 years – that’s a lot of Board meetings! Polly and her husband John hosted many Board meetings in their home, with plenty of coffee, fudge and other goodies to keep us fueled for the hours it took to get everything done. With her decades of experience as a conservationist, Polly had plenty to say about many issues and places.

I was the attorney for N3C and other parties in a series of lawsuits to protect National Forest roadless areas (i.e. wilderness candidate areas) from negative impacts of motorized off-road vehicle recreation, starting 25 years ago with the North Fork Entiat case. Polly was always a strong supporter of my work on these lawsuits, and I’m eternally grateful for her support.

Polly was an organizer of the periodic Northwest Regional Wilderness and Parks Conferences in Seattle. At the 1994 conference, Ira Spring and I staffed the

*Polly Dyer (2nd left) and William O. Douglas (center right) on hike protesting proposed coastal highway, Olympic National Park, ca. August 19, 1958. —COURTESY MOHAI (IMAGE NO. PI 86.5.23791.1)*

WTA table, Pat Goldsworthy worked the N3C table next to us, and Polly helped us spread the word about the North Entiat precedent as well as our upcoming Dark Divide battle. She “showed me the ropes” and introduced me to many other activists with whom I’m still working, locally and nationally.

Polly recruited me onto the organizing committee for the 1998 national wilderness conference, and helped me get the program to include a panel on motorized recreation threats to wilderness (apparently the first time the issue made it onto the program of a wilderness conference). Later Polly helped me participate in other regional and national wilderness conferences in other parts of the country. I was honored to carry her luggage as we hiked the streets of Berkeley, and happy just to be with her in Albuquerque for the 50th anniversary of the Wilderness Act.

### Dave Fluharty

Polly was one of the first people I met as a high school kid in the early 1960s wanting to help out with N3C. It wasn’t until the late 1960s that I really got a chance to interact with her because we were both studying in the Department of Geogra-

phy at the University of Washington. We were lucky to be able to take courses from Grant McConnell when he was a visiting faculty member in the Department of Political Science [on interest group politics]; Richard Cooley, a newly minted Geography Prof brought to the UW to design a program for interdisciplinary study of the environment; and long-term N3C member Bill Beyers who was instrumental in performing the input/output model for the National Park Service that showed benefits to local communities from the establishment of North Cascades National Park.

In the swirl of life, I got drafted into the Army and Polly got pulled away from her studies to become the Coordinator for the newly founded Institute for Environmental Studies. Over time Polly never did get her Master’s degree because she did not write a thesis. However, Polly in her day job was a superb organizer and convener of conferences on all the major environmental issues in Washington much to the annoyance of many in the School of Forestry. We all know Polly wore two hats. Her day job was barely done when she put on her Wilderness Conference organizing hat to organize a whole series of Wilderness Conferences. I can’t begin to recount all of the ways that Polly contributed to the growth and nurturing of the environmental movement and environmentalists in this region. I can recount how hard it was to say no to Polly when she asked you to help with her latest enterprise. How could you say no when you saw the energy, thought and sheer audacity that Polly had for making things happen. Even Justice William O. Douglas or Senator Dan Evans could not say no to Polly.

### Tom Hammond

Polly Dyer is directly responsible for my presence on the board of the North Cascades Conservation Council, and more generally for my involvement in the conservation community. I attended a Sierra Club function more than 10 years ago in the hopes I would meet a woman who might become my partner/spouse. The function was to celebrate John and Polly, and as fate would have it, I did meet a woman at that SC event—it was Polly! While she was spoken for, we had a delightful conversation—Polly was sharp and charismatic, and we exchanged stories of Easy Pass, climbing the peaks of Ragged Ridge and other such explorations of the North Cascades. Of course, the first time Polly crossed Easy Pass, there was no highway—they hiked all the way from Diablo, or close to there! Such was Polly’s

nature: unflinching in the face of challenge, always ready to take on something more meaningful, and a timeless perspective that is so hard to come by these days. My favorite memories are the interactions and conversations we had while driving the two or three hours to various meetings and events. Polly would share with me how she and Johnny met, and how she refused to wear skirts while hiking (which was the order of the day when she was younger). As well, comparing notes about how best to protect the landscape, now and for future generations. Polly always had her vision on the long-term health of the ecosystem that is the North Cascades, and I try to emulate her perspective and drive at every moment of life. Thank you Polly!

### **Brock Evans**

Polly was one of my very earliest mentors, and I have strong memories of the many evenings at her house, wherein we volunteers, led by Polly, marched around a table, first organizing, then folding, licking, and stuffing the latest newsletter mailing, or hearing alert, or other messaging we couldn't afford to turn over to a mailing house. A monthly occurrence, sometimes more often depending on political circumstances, at the Dyer residence. And that is where I learned so much about "how things really worked... and how much power ordinary citizens had when they mobilized and worked together..."

My recollections about afterwards were mostly of the delivery of Chinese food, plus the martinis (which Pat Goldsworthy especially loved!), but I don't think we'd want that kind of detail in a formal resolution! I'm sure there was plenty of coffee too!

Those work-evenings were, above all for me, the camaraderie and unique bonding that comes from working together in a shared cause.

### **Benjamin Greuel, Washington State Program Director, The Wilderness Society**

A few years ago, I walked into the Buckhorn Wilderness via the Lower Grey Wolf Trail with Polly Dyer. Among the many interactions I had with Polly throughout the years, it was the most memorable and the one I cherish the most. Polly's mark on the landscape and her status as a conservation giant and American treasure will rightfully be told, but her compassion and willingness to mentor, inspire and tutor young conservationists is what I am most grateful for. Thanks, Polly.



*Polly Dyer, left, and Margaret Miller prior to their historic hike to Cascade Pass in 2010.  
—© TOM HAMMOND PHOTO*

*"The Wilderness Bill's provisions will do a number of important and necessary things in behalf of the nation's present and future wild places and for its citizens who look for or merely like to know that such sanctuaries exist. ... Wilderness cannot and should not wear a dollar sign. It is a priceless asset which all the dollars man can accumulate will not buy back. Some forest which is commercially operable has as much right to be kept primeval as the forest of non-commercial value. Congress through this bill can help take the price tag off some of these remaining wilderness forests."*

—Polly testifying to Congress, June 25, 1957

It's no secret that in recent years much of our state's formerly formidable forest conservation and preservation movement has gone to the dogs. With a few happy exceptions – notably those farsighted folks who originated proposals to protect the Wild Sky Wilderness and Pratt River additions to the Alpine Lakes Wilderness – numerous organizations whose missions are centered around the well-being of our national forests have come to resemble a timid whippet, obsessed with currying favor from its master and willing to submit to all manner of indignities. In some cases, turncoats have come to inhabit these wayward forest groups, though in most instances their sad decline is due more to an interminable chase for revenue; with moral certitude for the defense of wild nature casually exchanged for snuggling up to fickle donors, and self-assuredness tossed aside for purposes of glad-handing industrial interests and plutocrats who've long worked in opposition to "keeping it like it was." Add to this grasstops prejudice a tendency toward useless turf wars, plus a paranoid communication style which eschews place-based activism in favor of noncommittal language emerging from insular, hyper-secretive process, and one gets an idea of how a generally progressive state still with well over two million acres of wild-but-unprotected national forest land has accomplished so little in this regard over the past three decades.

To be sure, though, sociopolitical events of 2016 to the present date have prompted some reassessment of priorities among forest groups who'd long since wandered off into the noxious weeds. Clarity of purpose and resulting energies are known to increase in direct proportion to the degree of external, existential threat looming before us. It's too soon to predict to what extent these groups will rekindle the spirited and focused campfires of old, though early indications suggest that many of them are at least beginning to experience a groggy reawakening, shaking off their nasty neoliberal hangovers and taking the first tentative steps toward devoting themselves anew to the deep and timeless rhythms of a neglected and abused Ma Nature. It will help immeasurably that a very few forest groups, with N3C decidedly among them, managed to keep both the faith and their sobriety across the uninspired years in between, and can thus point the way back to the righteous path of defending and

## Corvid's eye



protecting our national forests against all adversaries. This path leads to modernization of our vision for these irreplaceable lands and streams, with clearheaded and open-eyed emphases on carbon sequestration, water quality and quantity, habitat for wild flora and fauna, and compatible recreation.

A central tool for attaining these contemporary priorities, ironically enough, dates back to 1964. Yes, it's the Wilderness Act, which much like the beneficiaries of its designation has been alternately maligned, ignored, and diluted of strength over the course of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Even among aficionados of designated Wilderness like the corvid, there have been darker moments where any new application of the Act has seemed a futile ex-

ercise, sure to result in mischief; splitting the baby among competing interests and probably doing more harm than good. But again, these are new and troubling times, whereby even the true believers might have collected some dust during the long interregnum that now needs shaking off. Designated Wilderness as a meaningful concept and concrete means for protecting rare and vulnerable portions of our national forests may well be reinvigorated, if we don't die trying. Yet it's all but certain that oblivion is in much closer proximity to all of us, every species, than we had ever guessed before. Taking our cue from Dylan Thomas, let us not go gentle into that good night. If die we must, can there be a better way to gracefully exit than to celebrate and fight for those places where an alert ear may still detect the roar of the ages, where the forces of life continue untrammelled?

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*“Across all spheres – political, ecological, and extramundane – it's gut check time for sure.”*

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This being *The Wild Cascades*, our interests in this context are necessarily oriented around the Mount Baker-Snoqualmie and Okanogan-Wenatchee national forests, perhaps also north of U.S. Highway 2 for the sake of succinctness. Still a rather large area, though it allows us to home in on regional places of merit. Where exactly? Operating under the assumption that the 237,000-acre American Alps Legacy Project along the flanks of North Cascades National Park will eventually become the law of the land, preferably alongside a major new Wilderness bill, our highlights west of the crest include, north to south: Quartz Creek, the upper Nooksack basins, Grouse Ridge, Loomis Mountain, middle Baker basin, Helen Buttes south, Pressentin Creek, Higgins Creek, upper Illabot basin, Huckleberry Mountain, Lime Creek and middle Suiattle basin, middle Whitechuck basin, Helena Creek to Barlow Pass, Weden Creek to Boardman Creek, and upper Sloan Creek. East of the crest, again north to south, names to remember are: Pasayten Rim and Farewell Creek, Long Swamp and Twentymile, Tiffany, West Fork Methow basin, Cedar Creek, Twisp basin, North Fork Entiat to Lake Chelan, Entiat Mountains, middle Chiwawa basin, middle White basin, Fish/Fall creeks, Lake Creek basin, and Nason Ridge.

The anchor of each of these superb places is untouched wildness, but there's no bashfulness with incorporating additional acreage which is well into the process of re-wilding or otherwise ripe for the same. This is in keeping with our modern emphases on watersheds and habitat, not to mention carbon sinks. And although most of this acreage is managed already for non-motorized recreation, what of those trails with established mountain bike use? The corvid humbly suggests dispensing with this conundrum and seeking the least convoluted solution. For example, there's nothing to prevent an "Upper Methow National Recreation Area" with narrow, non-Wilderness corridors along the W. Fork Methow, Cedar Creek, and Cuthroat Creek trails, while sporting Wilderness designation across the remainder of the untrailed acreage. And how to achieve forward motion with this larger proposal? To borrow from a prominent 20th century U.S. senator, get out of the insulated meeting rooms and start such a grand parade that our political leaders become compelled to lead it. Recruit persuasive young people to speak for the movement, loud and proud, bearing colorful maps and photographs. And know, too,

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## DNR initiates trail planning process for Morningstar NRCA

By Rick McGuire

The Washington state Department of Natural Resources has started a trail planning process for the Morningstar Natural Resource Conservation Area (NRCA) located mostly in the mountains surrounding the Sultan River Basin. NRCAs are the DNR's near-equivalent of Wilderness for the state-owned lands it administers.

The upper reaches of the Sultan Basin are a seldom-visited place. Starting in 1960 a dam was built to supply water for the city of Everett, impounding Spada reservoir. A power generation component was added by the Snohomish PUD in the early 1980s, enlarging the reservoir.

Most of the old-growth forest was cut during the 1960s and 1970s, with a final

push that scraped forests off even many of the steep mountainsides in the upper watersheds of the Sultan. When the reservoir was enlarged in the 1980s much of the road network was cut off by the newly risen waters. This left many of the valleys above the reservoir in an almost inaccessible state, since motorboats are not allowed on the reservoir.

The roads above the reservoir were built as cheaply as possible, meant to last only as long as it took to get the timber out, and have now almost crumbled away. Valleys such as Williamson Creek, the North Fork Sultan, Elk Creek, and the three forks of the South Fork Sultan are now quite lonely places.

Sitting in the wet convergence zone at the western front of the Cascades, the Sultan Basin receives among the highest average rainfall of anywhere in the state outside of the western Olympics. It is ringed by some of the most remote mountains in the entire Cascade range.

DNR established three NRCAs in years past, Mt. Pilchuck, Greider Lakes and Morningstar. These three were combined

*Aerial view, looking west, of Spada Reservoir in Sultan Basin and part of Morningstar NRCA to left. Puget Sound lowlands toward Everett in the distance. —DNR PHOTO*

into the Morningstar NRCA in 2007. The name comes from Morningstar Peak, a steep, seldom-climbed mountain standing above the North Fork Sultan valley east of Vesper Peak. The Morningstar NRCA now comprises almost 30,000 acres of land, most of it steep and difficult to access.

The eastern reaches of Morningstar NRCA are contiguous with the Ragged Ridge unit of the Wild Sky Wilderness on the Mt. Baker Snoqualmie National Forest. Together, they make a splendid, extensive area of unvisited, undisturbed “core security habitat” where wildlife can thrive without having to worry about people.

But not quite all of the Morningstar NRCA is steep, rocky and hard to get to. The northwestern reaches of it, on the east end of Mt. Pilchuck, have gentler terrain and a number of lakes set in very attractive forest, including the upper and lower Ashland lakes, Beaver Plant lake and Twin Falls lake. Some of the cedar forest near Ashland lakes appears to be “antique forest,” with no sign of ever having burned. Antique forests are forests that are older than any tree within them, and are a rarity even on the rainy west side of the Cascades.

Many cedars in the Ashland lakes area are probably 1000 or more years old, and look it. They are strikingly spreading and gnarled, with the kind of picturesque individual character that only really old trees have. It is a very green, lush and interesting area, true rainforest. The low gap east of Mt. Pilchuck near the Ashland lakes trail is also notable for once having been the site of a gigantic river that drained much of the Cascades when Ice Age glaciers blocked the lower reaches of the Stillaguamish valley.

Farther east, the upper reaches of the Sultan River and its tributaries are mostly trail-less and wild. DNR lands and the Morningstar NRCA extend north from the North Fork Sultan valley over the drainage divide into the South Fork Sauk (Monte Cristo) valley. A well-used trail climbs up Weden creek to scenic Gothic Basin, giving access to Gothic and DelCampo peaks.

On the south side of the Morningstar NRCA, trails go to Boulder and Greider lakes, both east of Olney Pass where the only road to the Sultan Basin crosses into it from the south. Boulder and Greider lakes both offer hikes to pleasant, if unremarkable, cirque lakes. The notorious road from the town of Sultan through the Olney Creek watershed to Olney Pass and the Sultan Basin is not for the faint of heart. It has long been famous for garbage dumping, drinkers and tweakers, wild

shooting, and every other kind of lowlife behavior. Sporadic efforts have been made to clean it up, but the place seems to have a strange energy that draws trouble from far and wide.

DNR has recently announced plans to study and make recommendations about trails in the Morningstar NRCA. A citizen advisory committee has been formed, and N3C is represented by former president Marc Bardsley, who has climbed probably every peak, no matter how hard to get to, in the Sultan Basin. Other conservation groups are also represented, notably Pilchuck Audubon Society, Alpine Lakes Protection Society and the Sierra Club.

Considering limited trail budgets, it makes sense to upgrade, rebuild and reopen existing trails, bringing them out of their current state of decay, rather than build new ones. The trails through the lovely Ashland lakes forests are probably the best place to start. They are in dire need of new boardwalking and turnpiking, and ways need to be found to provide solid footing in this rainforest environment. Previous attempts included such mistakes as laying cross sections of logs along some stretches of trail. These immediately became dangerously slimy and slick and people avoided them for good reason. A lot of gravel and work will be needed to make the trails at Ashland lakes safe and sustainable. But such an attractive place is worth the effort.

The Weden Creek trail to Gothic Basin needs work to accommodate its heavy use levels, and the trails to Boulder and Greider lakes, long neglected, need to be cleared, brushed out and improved.

Renewing and reopening the existing and semi-abandoned trails of the Morningstar NRCA will open up valuable new recreational opportunities. Leaving the trail-less, seldom-visited reaches alone will allow them to continue to provide splendid habitat for many species of wildlife. The NRCA's 30,000 acres have plenty of room to handle visitors on properly sited trails and to provide a safe home for wildlife in places where no trails go. N3C believes that DNR should be able to come up with a vision, and a plan, for Morningstar that balances both recreation and wildlife.

Links to maps of the Pilchuck/Ashland Lakes and the Greider Lakes trail systems, along with other information, can be found on the DNR's Morningstar web page, [www.dnr.wa.gov/morningstar](http://www.dnr.wa.gov/morningstar).

## Corvid's eye

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that it will take many years and elections to achieve. The proposal itself, though, has no shortage of power. It serves as a shot across the bow of the U.S. Forest Service, as well as unfriendly politicians and their industrialist masters. It makes clear to all what we will unapologetically and resolutely defend.

Let no crisis go to waste. The current federal government is not just the sum of most conservationists' fears, but also the perfect foil. There's no better response in this pitch-black hour than to harness the promise of the dawn; to ensure that the future (whether near or far) reflects what we know to be the responsible and ethical course for our public lands. Native forests, wild rivers, and self-willed landscapes will be protected, this we commit to. Across all spheres – political, ecological, and extramundane – it's gut check time for sure.

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## A passion for preservation

*How dreams become a reality at the President's desk*

*Hurry! Ends March 17, 2017*

To celebrate the 100th anniversary of the National Park Service, Klondike - Seattle and the University of Washington Museology Graduate Program present this newest exhibition.

Famed environmentalist Wallace Stegner once said that national parks are “the best idea we (Americans) ever had.” But America's best idea doesn't start with the president – it often starts with passionate individuals committed to the preservation of our natural landscapes and historic landmarks (hint – like Polly Dyer and many other N3C members!).

The exhibit examines how some of our Washington State national parks were made: starting with the passionate individuals who advocate for their creation, to the local public officials who take up the cause, and finally with the president who establishes the parks by signing them in into law. The exhibition will run through March 17, 2017 at the Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park – Seattle Unit, 319 Second Avenue South.

# SAM sculpture honors real tree in the real Middle Fork

*“Middle Fork”* – a massive reclaimed cedar sculpture now spanning the length of the Brotman Forum, the main entrance lobby of the Seattle Art Museum – is a tribute to one of our favorite places, the Middle Fork of the Snoqualmie River.

Sculptor John Grade must like it, too. First, he chose a hemlock about 150 years old that lives near the Middle Fork. Then he created a plaster cast of the tree—a great excuse to hang from its branches for a couple of weeks, he told the *Seattle Times*.

He and hundreds of volunteers and some paid studio assistants used the cast as a mold to build a new tree out of half a million segments of reclaimed cedar. Each piece was hand carved to match the contours of the original tree.

Just like a tree, his sculpture has grown with each installation. First displayed at the University of Wyoming Art Museum in 2014 when it was 18 feet long, it grew to 45 feet during its installation at the Smithsonian Institute’s Renwick Gallery. The SAM installation is its longest yet – over 100 feet long!

Visit SAM to see the sculpture before it goes “home” to the Middle Fork, where Grade plans to lay it at the base of the original tree to moss over and decay.

—RON BLUNT PHOTO



# N3C history... revealed! Early issues of *TWC* now online

Just in time for our 60th anniversary, back issues of our journal *The Wild Cascades* are now online almost all the way to the first issue in '57! We are very grateful to Christine White, widow of Patrick Goldsworthy, for donating his collection. Thanks as well to a generous member for contributing an enormous amount of time and effort to scan and post *The Wild Cascades* issues prior to 2001.

As a quick look at the website below indicates, we are still missing selected issues from 1957, 1973, 1974, 1984, 1988, 1989, and 1990. Contact Phil Fenner at [pbilf@northcascades.org](mailto:pbilf@northcascades.org) if you have one of these issues to lend us to scan so our collection can be complete.

Find the archive at our website's "Publications" menu under "*The Wild Cascades Journal*" where issues appear newest-first with their tables of contents, or you can view the covers in a thumbnail gallery at: <http://npsbhistory.com/newsletters/the-wild-cascades/back-issues.btm>. Or for short: <http://tinyurl.com/ztge9na>



NORTH CASCADES CONSERVATION COUNCIL

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

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

Donate online at [www.northcascades.org](http://www.northcascades.org) – just click "Donate Now" and use your credit card.  
Or fill in this form and mail it to us at the address below.  
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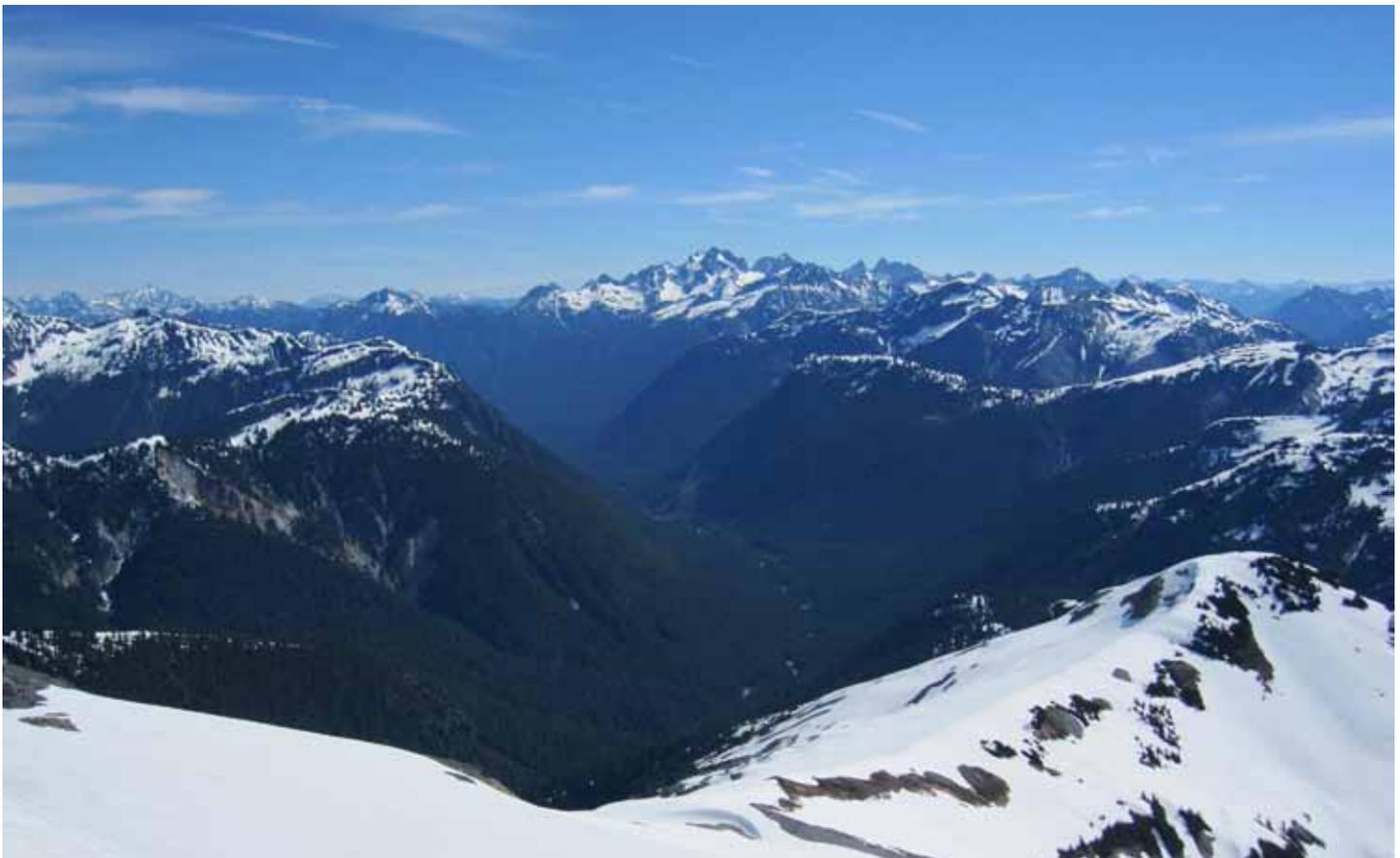
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*The Chilliwack River curls away from her headwaters on Ruth Mountain. The valley becomes blighted with clearcuts just beyond view, where the river leaves North Cascades National Park and enters Canada. The forests seen here are a strong testament to the preservation power of National Park and Wilderness designation. —© TOM HAMMOND PHOTO*