

THE
FUTURE
OF
AMERICA'S
NATIONAL
PARKS

First Annual
Centennial Strategy for

North Cascades National Park Service Complex

August 2007

CENTENNIAL INITIATIVE



Site: NOCA

Year: 2007

Vision Statement

North Cascades National Park Service Complex is located in Washington State along the border with Canada, approximately 100 miles northeast from Seattle. The North Cascades National Park Service Complex is comprised of North Cascades National Park, Ross Lake National Recreation Area and Lake Chelan National Recreation Area, a complementary suite of protected lands, united by a contiguous wilderness overlay. Combining these three distinct units under a single unique administration recognizes their shared purpose of preserving the core of the greater North Cascades ecosystem and wilderness while also advancing their individual purposes. Nearly 93% of the entire Complex is part of the legislatively designated Stephen Mather Wilderness which, when combined with adjacent U. S. Forest Service designated wilderness, provides a two million acre contiguous wilderness area.

Principles important in guiding the management of resources and values within the Complex are:

Stewardship: Striving to use science in making informed decisions. This science-based stewardship advances our knowledge and appreciation of the North Cascades.

Partnerships: North Cascades NPS Complex views partnerships as integral for achieving the purposes for which the park was created as well as the basis for achieving shared goals of resource protection, education and recreation.

Trans-boundary Ecosystem Management: Through our relationship with the Skagit Environmental Endowment Commission, British Columbia Ministry of Environment , U.S. Forest Service and other parties, the North Cascades NPS Complex is dedicated to the pursuit of cooperative trans-boundary activities focused on a wide range of visitor, resource and operational issues.

Park/ Superintendent/ Program Manager

Chip Jenkins

Site: NOCA

STEWARDSHIP

Provide inspiring, safe, and accessible places for people to enjoy - the standard to which all other park systems aspire.

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

North Cascades National Park Service Complex will, in response to the growing visitor need and request, construct a group shelter at the "Wagonwheel" group site in Colonial Creek Campground. Colonial is our most popular campground in the park. The "wagonwheel" is designed to accommodate large group camping. Visitors would have a sheltered facility to provide a dry area to congregate and cook during inclement weather. Camping sites would be near the shelter as "spokes" of the wheel. This shelter will greatly enhance the experience of our visitors. Over 80 inches of rain fall in this area each year.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: NOCA

STEWARDSHIP

Improve the condition of park resources and assets.

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

The Diablo Lake Overlook is the most popular location within the park complex, receiving an estimated 100,000 annual visitors. From this point, visitors can see the dense concentration of jagged glaciated peaks that provide inspirational views and a window into the refuge and challenge that characterizes the wildness of the North Cascades. To capitalize on possible contacts with these park visitors, the park proposes to construct an interpretive shelter at the Overlook. The structure will provide an area sheltered from the sun and wind for the interpreters, a gathering point for visitors and interpretive information through exhibits. This project will further some of the other work which has recently taken place at the Overlook such as new restrooms, walkways and landscaping, which create a welcoming and comfortable place to explore and learn.

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Site: NOCA

STEWARDSHIP

Serve as the Preeminent resource laboratory by applying excellence in science and scholarship to understand and respond to environmental changes.

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

The North Cascades ecosystem has numerous weather stations scattered about, but very few in the high elevation areas. These high country areas are home to glaciers, snowfields, and subalpine and alpine plants and animals, all resources at significant risk as global warming continues unabated. The park proposes to install two low-cost, semi-permanent high elevation weather stations in the northernmost reaches of the park. At both sites, measurements would include temperature, snow depth, wind speed and direction, solar radiation and humidity. This effort would also include the maintenance of the equipment, archiving of collected data and the analysis of trends and variability in basic weather at these alpine sites. The installation location coincides with one of the long-term glacier monitoring sites in the park which would also improve our understanding of annual glacier mass conditions. The data collected would be linked to a larger regional data set for sites above 6,000 ft. elevation and would support the hydroelectric industry, salmon and trout recovery efforts, fire management, flood forecasting and natural resource managers in the state and region.

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Site: NOCA

STEWARDSHIP

Encourage children to be future conservationists.

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

This project will support a national symposium for National Park officials, environmental educators and partner groups to explore the future of education on public lands. The event would be held at the North Cascades Environmental Learning Center and would take place during the 40th anniversary of the North Cascades National Park Service Complex. The symposium would result in tangible strategies and new partnerships dedicated to the fostering and encouragement of teaching in wild lands. It will challenge thinking about how to foster diversity in our national parks and how to increase the use of national parks by people of diverse cultural and socio-economic backgrounds. These strategies can be translated into curriculum elements that encourage continued learning of NPS lands throughout students' school years.

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Site: NOCA

ENVIRONMENT

Inspire an environmental conscience in Americans.

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Glaciers cover nearly 70 square miles in Olympic and North Cascades national parks, representing more than half of all the glaciers in the lower 48 states. Global warming has claimed about 40% of the glacier area between 1900 and the 1980s, and indications are that this rapid loss will continue. The last glacier inventory at Olympic National Park was 1982 and while North Cascades National Park inventory was completed in 1998, rapid melting during the past 10 years has gone unmeasured. Understanding the rate of loss of the glaciers is important for several reasons. First, glaciers are a critical component of the region's fresh water resources. Glacial melt water is delivered during the hot, dry summer, buffering streams, lakes, wetlands, and hydropower industries from drought. Second, glaciers are iconic features of the North Cascades. Many visitors come to see and recreate on snow and glacier clad peaks. Finally, glaciers are sensitive, dramatic indicators of climate change. Measuring their rate of decline provides a valuable local, regional, and global measure of climate change for educators, park interpretive staff and scientists.

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Site: NOCA

RECREATION

Encourage collaboration among and assist park and recreation systems at every level—federal, regional, state, local—to help build an outdoor recreation network accessible to all Americans.

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

The park proposes to produce a HDTV video designed to help visitors better plan for safe backcountry trips within the North Cascades National Park Service Complex and surrounding area. The video will provide a multimedia presentation that reinforces existing information about the park's permit system, low impact camping, and activity specific conditions backcountry users will encounter in the park. Park staff will work closely with representatives from BC Parks and the US Forest Service to incorporate their critical messages into the video since the park is bordered by these agencies. The DVD could be mailed out to interested parties including commercial users and groups; viewed at visitor centers as well as downloaded from the Internet. The video would provide targeted information to equestrian, hiking/backpacking/mountaineering and lake users creating a visual awareness of the knowledge, skills and equipment needed to safely traverse this rugged mountain region.

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Site: NOCA

RECREATION

Establish "volun-tourism" excursions to national parks for volunteers to help achieve natural and cultural resource protection goals.

Increase annual volunteer hours by 100 percent, from 5.2 million hours to 10.4 million hours.

North Cascades National park will continue to foster volunteer community participation in a variety of resource stewardship activities.

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Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

North Cascades National Park Service Complex has benefitted from the support of volunteers and partner groups assisting with park projects. In order to support the groups currently assisting the park, and to encourage new partnerships, the park will construct a group cooking and congregation shelter on the Marblemount Ranger Station compound. The Shelter shall have a concrete floor and roof structure to insure dry space for food preparation and picnic-style eating . The Shelter would be approximately 20 feet by 40 feet to accommodate several picnic tables. This roofed shelter would also provide a space, protected from the average 80 inches of rain, for park staff to work closely with volunteers, SCA groups (both US and international) and other partners.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: NOCA

RECREATION

Focus national, regional, and local tourism efforts to reach diverse audiences and young people and to attract visitors to lesser-known parks.

Increase visitation by 25 percent at lesser-known parks through a national tourism effort aimed at helping people to discover the breadth of parks and experiences.

The North Cascades National Park Service is looking for opportunities to welcome a diverse community to the park. A proposed project will introduce new members of the park's diverse gateway community to the outdoors and the national park system through targeted outreach and specialized programming at the North Cascades Environmental Learning Center. This project will result in a focused outreach effort to help the new members of the local community learn that national parks are places for family fun, learning and recreation. A recent survey of park visitors found that 94% of park visitors identify themselves as Caucasian. However the composition of the park's gateway communities is in the process of significant change. Nearly 40% of these individuals are Hispanic or Latino, a population which is expected to continue to grow. Approximately 10 classes from low-income schools will participate in a Mountain School program, 5 special summer programs, and 50 classes will receive a follow-up Mountain School visit. Educational brochures, trip planning, web-based resources and promotional materials will also be developed for these targeted groups.

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Site: NOCA

EDUCATION

Cooperate with educators to provide curriculum materials, high-quality programs, and park-based and online learning.

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

North Cascades National Park Service Complex plans to participate in the "Teacher to Ranger to Teacher" program. This program, which was piloted in the park in 2007, will recruit a school teacher to spend eight weeks in the park developing curricula about the park and the National Park Service for use back in the classroom. The teacher will also review existing and develop new curricula for park use. This project will produce an educator who has formed a lasting connection to the park and who is equipped with curricula to use in the classroom to enhance student education and to broaden awareness of national parks. The teacher, with an education degree and practical classroom experience, will help train, educate and raise the quality of park education and interpretation programs.

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Site: NOCA

EDUCATION

Introduce young people and their families to national parks by using exciting media and technology.

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

In 2006, the park completed an in-depth survey of park users which identified that 68% of visitors to North Cascades are part of a family group. The park proposes to design, fabricate and install new furnishings and other structures to create a dynamic and fun children's learning area in the North Cascades National Park Visitor Center. A puppet stage, touch table, bulletin board, books, games and other interactive elements will encourage children to explore, play and learn in a special area of the Visitor Center specially designed for them and their families. This project will improve the learning opportunities available to this segment of the park's visitation and promote a life-long interest in learning about the North Cascades and connect generations through park experiences.

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Site: NOCA

EDUCATION

Promote life-long learning to connect generations through park experiences.

Enroll an additional two million children in the Junior Ranger program.

This Centennial project will create a new Junior Ranger Program for North Cascades National Park Service Complex through the development and production of a new series of activity booklets tailored to our park and its resources. The booklets will engage the entire family, encourage the party to visit multiple park sites, provide fun learning opportunities and create lasting memories for generations. A seasonal interpretive park ranger will be hired and would be responsible for the development and field-testing of program components with families. The ranger will consult with park staff in educational content to assure that current information on cultural and natural resources as well as scientific research is incorporated into the booklets. There will be a minimum of one distinct booklet produced for the Hozomeen, Highway 20 Corridor and Stehekin areas of the park and will target specific age groups from age 5 and above. These Junior Ranger activity booklets will be available on the park's website. It is expected that the new booklets, and their availability on the web, will more than double the annual number of new North Cascades Junior Rangers to over 1,000.

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Site: NOCA

EDUCATION

Impart to every American a sense of their citizen ownership of their national parks.

Increase visitors' satisfaction, understanding, and appreciation of the parks they visit.

Visitors have identified a need for protected picnic facilities to be constructed near the Newhalem Visitor Center (VC) and at Colonial Creek Campground-South. We currently provide picnic tables near the main parking lot at Colonial and these facilities are used and appreciated by visitors, but they do not provide shelter from the elements. On average, these areas receive over 80 inches of rain per year. The park proposes to construct up to five small picnic shelters around the Newhalem VC and up to three near the main Colonial Creek Campground parking lot to serve visitors seeking day use picnic facilities. Shelters would be large enough to cover one universal accessible compliant picnic table, while protecting visitors from rain and/or sun. The Newhalem VC and Colonial Creek Campground are located along State Route 20. Estimated 5 year average of visitors traveling this route Eastbound is 160,825; West-bound is 137,200. Many of these are visitors traveling from one side of Washington to the other with family and friends. We are also seeing an increase in motorcycle and bicycling enthusiasts. These shelters would provide a scenic, safe and comfortable respite from travel.

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