

THE WILD CASCADES

THE JOURNAL OF THE NORTH CASCADES CONSERVATION COUNCIL

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JOSEPH W. MILLER
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COVER: *Big Beaver Valley marsh; lower left, Restoration work at Cascade Pass (TWC Oct. 1991); lower right, Joe and Margaret Miller on Pumpkin Mountain, Big Beaver Valley*

The Wild Cascades

Journal of the North Cascades Conservation Council

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Carolyn McConnell and Rick McGuire

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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 third of a century the NCCC has led or participated in campaigns to create the North Cascades National Park Complex, Glacier Peak Wilderness, and other units of the National Wilderness System from the W.O. Douglas Wilderness north to the Alpine Lakes Wilderness, the Henry M. Jackson Wilderness, the Chelan-Sawtooth Wilderness, 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: Low Income/Student \$10; Individual \$30; Family \$50; Sustaining \$100; Grizzly Bear \$250; Howling Wolf \$500; Lifetime \$1,000; Other, \$_____.

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Founded in 1957
SEATTLE, WASHINGTON

The President's Report

Spring 2007

Like most of the media, I continually write about and think about "bad news". So often those of us involved in the conservation community are up to our noses in the smelly pit of acrimonious controversy, but now there is a huge bright spot in sight. At the time of this writing, the Wild Sky Wilderness appears to be a well-deserved victory for our side. It has passed the House of Representatives at last, now that our nemesis, Richard Pombo, has moved on to other mischief. It appears that the Senate will quickly pass a similar bill and with luck, it will be signed by the President. Perhaps it is already a fact as you read this.

We all owe a lot to our state delegation, many local officials including mayors, councilmen, and other elected officials from the entire region. But the people we really owe the most, in my mind, are ourselves. The Wild Sky Wilderness was conceived on paper for the first time when a group of our members and a few like-minded folks from other organizations met at a board member's place in Index. Sitting around the kitchen table, we roughed out the lines on the map that are fairly close to the now agreed upon 106,000 acres of the Wild Sky and Jackson Wilderness additions. The idea took off immediately and local conservation groups have helped with securing support for the Wild Sky. Even when it looked like a bill would never pass Congress, we held tough and refused to excise some of the controversial areas that included previous disturbances. This refusal to compromise for the sake of showing a small success, proved to be the most important part of the Wild Sky process. It showed that, just because an area was slightly developed years ago, it still could qualify for Wilderness. Future Wilderness bills will be better if they can include important features like long-abandoned roads, old mines, or logging being reclaimed by nature. So let's hear it for ourselves just this once, then get back to work to protect something else.

Marc Bardsley

NCCC Supports Closure of the Upper Stehekin Road

Maria Cantwell
U.S. Senate
717 Hart Senate Office Bldg
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Cantwell:

I am writing in regards to the upper Stehekin Road in the North Cascades National Park. As you may know, that road (along with many others in the area) was dramatically washed out by a flood in 2003. A flood in 1995 had already washed out the upper several miles of the road above Park Creek to such a degree that the National Park Service advised against attempting to repair it. I am aware that State Senator Linda Evans Parlette and others have written you regarding the Stehekin road, urging your support for rebuilding it. I'm writing to you on behalf of the Board of the North Cascades Conservation Council (NCCC) to be sure you have a full and accurate picture of the situation as you consider taking action on the matter. NCCC is on record as supporting the National Park Service decision to close the upper road as the most environmentally and fiscally responsible alternative.

I am both a member of the NCCC's board of directors and a third-generation property owner in the Stehekin Valley. My grandparents were leaders in the effort to create the North Cascades National Park. Throughout my lifetime, I have watched the upper Stehekin Road wash out over and over again, and I know that my grandparents and mother saw it do the same throughout their lifetimes. Many other NCCC Board members have argued for the last 50 years that the Stehekin road should be closed at High Bridge because of the expense of maintaining it and because a trail into Wilderness is a better option to serve the public over the long run.

Since the establishment of the Park, millions of federal tax dollars have been spent rebuilding the road after massive floods and simply repairing snow and water damage after every winter—this is the reality of trying to keep a road open in a narrow mountain valley. The difficulty and cost of maintaining this road are only likely to increase as global warming is predicted to increase the frequency and severity of flooding. Parlette advocated an appropriation of \$1.5 million to reopen the road but this cost estimate is low given damage from flooding in subsequent years [2005,2006] and the increasing costs of road construction in remote areas. In addition, the Parlette number ignores the cost of routine maintenance (never particularly routine in this remote mountain ravine) and

of reconstruction after likely future floods. The number of cars and NPS shuttles using the road is miniscule in comparison to the cost, and the NPS does not have an administrative need for a road. The questions any responsible public servant must ask are whether taxpayers are receiving fair value for this high-cost project and whether the public interest in access to the area can be satisfied in some other, less expensive, and less environmentally destructive way.

The answers are no and yes, respectively. To reopen the road would require an act of Congress to shift the wilderness boundary, a terrible precedent, as you as a supporter of Wilderness are surely aware. The upper Stehekin Road lies entirely within the Stephen Mather Wilderness, paralleling a spectacular mountain river deserving of Wild River status. The area is home to endangered and threatened species, such as spotted owls and Cascade frogs, and potential habitat for grey wolves and grizzlies. Coyotes, black bears, deer, elk, bobcats, and cougars abound. This wild valley is a unique and precious place for visitors to enjoy wilderness.

If the road were restored to a trail, some alpine destinations would no longer be day hikes. But the closure would create new day hikes. The former road would be a delightful and gently sloping trail, of the sort there are few of in the Stehekin Valley. This would be an important addition to the visitor experience, offering hiking and camping opportunities for families with small children, the physically impaired, and the elderly. A fraction of the cost of reopening and maintaining the road would cover converting the road to trail and maintaining the trail.

In her letter to you regarding the road, Senator Parlette mentioned the issue of economic impact on Stehekin residents of leaving the upper road closed and the impact on visitors of loss of day hikes. These are legitimate concerns, but they can be addressed without maintaining this costly and inappropriate violation of wilderness and the weakening of the Wilderness Act it would require. There is a deficit of good, accessible day hikes in the Stehekin Valley, which limits visitation, at a cost to the local economy. I have often watched with pity families with children walking along the Stehekin road in order to get to trailheads. This was surely not the wilderness experience they came for and not an experience likely to bring them back to Stehekin. To remedy this, new trails should

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Weavtel 1, Stehekin 0

Household Phones Arrive in Stehekin

CAROLYN MCCONNELL

The fight over phones in Stehekin ended in April not with a bang but with a dial tone. The victors—the Chelan-based company Weavtel and those few Stehekin residents who chose to get phone service—had reason to keep their win quiet. Most of their neighbors had vehemently opposed the installation of valley-wide phone service. Weavtel reported that it had initially installed phone lines in 10 homes. It was the end of an era for Stehekin.

The service is the result of massive subsidies—you and I and every phone customer in the country are paying for this service that most in Stehekin did not want. This is an unfortunate consequence of a well-intended but poorly designed provision of the 1996 Telecommunications Act. Universal access fees on every phone bill go into a pool of money intended to ensure that rural communities can receive phone service at affordable rates. The fees turn rural communities into pots of gold for people looking to make a guaranteed buck—or a lot more than a buck. The pool of money is administered not by the government but by a private company created by the phone companies, and there is no provision in the law for democratic oversight of the program. Nothing in the legislation provides for communities to weigh in on universal-access-fee-funded projects, not what kind of service they'll receive, not what company will provide it, not whether they want it at all. It's nearly impossible even to find anyone in the myriad government agencies and corporate entities involved to speak with about subsidized phone projects. (I tried and spent many hours being forwarded around the voice mail of the Federal Communications Commission, Department of Agriculture—don't ask why them—the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission to absolutely no avail.)

The process made a mockery of democracy. Because Weavtel's initial proposal involved placing lines on National Park Service land, the Park Service initiated a process to ask the public for input under the National Environmental Policy Act, perhaps the most democracy-enhancing piece of legislation ever written. The public, including many Stehekin residents, overwhelmingly opposed the project as damaging to Stehekin's unique human community and its wilderness values, and as a result the Park denied Weavtel's permit. But

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Call it Howard Lake

JONATHAN ROSENBLUM

Now it's official – you can call it “Howard Lake.”

The small body of water lying at the base of McGregor Mountain northwest of Stehekin will now bear the name of the intrepid black miner who staked claims on its shore more than 100 years ago.

On Friday, May 11, the Washington State Board on Geographic Names voted unanimously to rename “Coon Lake” in the North Cascades “Howard Lake.”

Howard Lake lies at 2000 feet at the base of McGregor, just north of where Agnes Creek feeds into the Stehekin River.

The renaming culminates a year-and-a-half-long effort to honor the black miner, Wilson Howard, who staked claims and lived in the area around the lake beginning in 1891. It also removes from official maps any lingering ambiguity as to whether the lake's name was a vicious slur against Mr. Wilson and his African heritage.

The name-change petition was initiated in 2006 by an adopted member of the McConnell clan. The change was supported by the Chelan County Commissioners, the Black Heritage Society, and several individuals with close ties to Stehekin.

At the May 11 hearing, board members expressed interest in recognizing Mr. Howard's contribution to the area, and they also noted reports that the lake area itself is not known for having raccoons. In voting for the name change, the board overcame objections from the National Park Service staff, which claimed that Mr. Howard had not made a significant contribution to the area, and that there was no evidence that the lake name had a pejorative connotation.

The six-member board is chaired by state Public Lands Commissioner, Doug Sutherland, a Republican.

Thanks to everyone who wrote letters and lobbied in support of the name change.

Now here's something everyone can do:

The naming of Howard Lake presents an opportunity to honor Mr. Howard and other miners who settled in the upper Stehekin Valley beginning in the late 1800s.

We encourage NCCC members to write to the new National Park Service superintendent (who arrived at his post only after the NPS objection letter had been sent), and urge him to commemorate the re-naming of Howard Lake.

Some ideas: Hold an interpretive talk or early miners and settlers; stage an exhibit of early settlers; place signs on trails heading toward the lake explaining the name change and local history.

You can write to:

Chip Jenkins, Superintendent
North Cascades National Park
810 State Rt. 20
Sedro-Woolley, WA 98284
email: Chip_jenkins@nps.gov

Climate Change Sets Stehekin River on Collision Course with Private Property

CAROLYN MCCONNELL

In recent years, catastrophic floods have come fast and furious to the Cascades. Every other year is now bringing a 20-year, or 50-year, or 100-year flood to many drainages. One of the drainages hardest hit by this shift is the Stehekin Valley. This fits neatly with predictions of the results of global warming; the Stehekin River drains the Cascade Crest, whose glaciers are likely to melt at a quickening pace as the climate warms, and the valley's winter temperatures typically have hovered just around freezing, so a shift of just a few degrees would have dramatic effects. In the last twelve years there have been three 100-year floods (as they say in the Princess Bride, that term must not mean what we think it means). Massive flooding in 1995 wiped out chunks of the Stehekin road, including the uppermost several miles, probably for good. In 2003 flooding wiped out numerous sections of the Stehekin Road, flooded several homes, and so thoroughly erased the upper road that it is unlikely the road can ever be reopened much more than a couple miles past High Bridge. (The NCCC has for years been recommending closure at this point.) In 2004 another massive flood destroyed more of the road and flooded more houses. In other years, including this past fall, smaller floods are doing increasing damage to houses and the road.

The flooding is setting up a collision between private interest and the national interest in preservation of wilderness. That conflict has come to a head this year, when at the behest of some Stehekin landowners the Chelan County commissioners pronounced a state of imminent flood emergency. This initiated accelerated permitting for flood control projects. It seemed to also effectively cut the U.S. Fish and Wildlife and the Park Service out of oversight of these projects, and it coincided with a leadership vacuum in the Park Service, with Superintendent Bill Paleck having just departed and Chip Jenkins yet to take his place.

For a moment it looked like a series of disastrous and ill-conceived flood control projects — involving dredging the river in multiple places and dumping thousands of yards of riprap — would be hastily undertaken, without consideration of their effectiveness or of their effects on the river ecology and which might well destroy the river as a wild stream. This, despite the fact that the entire run of the Stehekin River lies within federally protected park land. They can't do that, one might naively think. They very nearly did, especially as the Army Corps of Engineers for a moment appeared gonzo for it. There was a scuffle between the Corps' gonzo regulatory branch and the enforcement branch, where the law

and science hold more sway.

In April, at least one project was completed on private land, with the landowner and the county sheriff engaging in the latest installment of a melodrama of resistance to the long arm of the feds. The sheriff helicoptered in, hovered over the site, and pronounced all the permits in order. Problem was, he didn't know what he was talking about and the required Corps permits were not in order because they didn't exist. The Corps' enforcement arm is reportedly pondering what penalty to exact, but it will likely be a slap on the wrist and certainly not include removal of the illegally installed flood control devices.

The good news is that the Park Service seems to be doing its job to hold off major river manipulation. They have refused several requests for flood control projects on park land, and park geologist Jon Riedel is pushing for a major study of the river and options for management of it. His tracking shows that already 8 to 9 percent of the river's banks have been in some way altered by flood control devices, a horrifying sign that the Stehekin River is being slowly killed. While the NCCC rejects the idea that this beautiful wild stream is a problem in need of management, we support a measured, informed, and holistic approach to the problem of flood damage to private property and roads in Stehekin.

National Attention Now Focused on the North Cascades

The North Cascades Conservation Council has been invited to participate in an assessment of our North Cascades. As the regional leader in conservation efforts across this landscape, we appreciate the opportunity to participate, and the responsibility of doing what we think is best for the greater North Cascades ecosystem.

The Wilderness Society (TWS) has taken a much more pronounced interest in the North Cascades of late, and this is now manifesting itself as the "North Cascades Initiative." One of the first elements of the Initiative was "The North Cascades Opinion Study."

Because this survey was conducted by The Wilderness Society in conjunction with The Cascade Loop Association and Washington State Tourism, the NCCC is concerned there may be an emphasis placed on tourism, including business-oriented opportunities. The TWS Executive Summary of this survey reveals that a vast majority of respondents have a strong desire to retain the wilderness character of the park and surrounding areas

(that is, roughly 85 percent of respondents chose terms like "hiking," "climbing," and "wilderness" over things like "wine-tasting," and "shopping" to describe what they do/want in the North Cascades).

The Initiative has now moved on to the "Wildlands and Recreational Assets Inventory."

The members of this Inventory include: The Wilderness Society (sponsoring organization), Sierra Club, Alpine Lakes Protection Society, Friends of Wild Sky, Mount Baker Wild, Washington Wilderness Coalition and, of course, the NCCC.

It is the hope of the NCCC that the net result of this Inventory will be an emphasis on and expansion of Wilderness. We look forward to working with these fine organizations and motivated, like-minded people to emphasize those things that make the North Cascades so vital and unique untrammeled areas safe from development. In short, to protect our Wilderness Alps.

Radio Repeater Update

TOM HAMMOND

The US Forest Service and National Park Service are moving forward with the upgrade/conversion of the National Forest-/National Park-wide radio communications to a narrow-band system.

This means there will likely be five mountaintops in wilderness that will have significant infrastructure (large boxes with mast antennae) placed on them.

Alternative systems proposed by the NCCC proved to be insufficient, ironically due to the huge trees throughout the park. Alternative systems require line of sight, and said trees impede LOS to the point of preventing their widespread effectiveness. Furthermore, the narrow-band system has been mandated by Congress, so the USFS and NPS are compelled to comply with the system. I personally believe there is also a certain degree of contractual inertia — deals made with private industry are not easily broken.

There is a hopeful sign though: in meeting with National Park Service employees, it has become clear that the individuals charged with this project are doing what they can to mitigate the impacts. The NCCC will continue to ask the Park Service and Forest Service for information on this project, as well as provide feedback to ensure the impacts of such development are minimized in our wilderness areas. The Environmental Assessment for the project will be out by the time this edition of *The Wild Cascades* goes to print.

NCCC Supports Closure of the Upper Stehekin Road

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be built in the lower Stehekin Valley, directly accessible from the boat landing and providing delightful and easy camping and day hiking, as well as pleasant foot access to the Pacific Crest Trail and longer backpacks in the heart of the Cascade crest. In fact, a Stehekin Valley trail on the northeast side of the river was surveyed by the National Park Service (Park officials should be able to provide maps of the proposed trail), connecting with the existing Lakeshore, Purple, Rainbow Loop, Boulder, and Pacific Crest trails. Another trail could continue the existing river trail on the southwest side of the river up to High Bridge to link with the Pacific Crest trail. Park rangers could offer guided nature walks, a service never convenient to offer on the alpine trails a long and jolting drive away from the Stehekin Visitor Center and the boat landing. At a fraction of the cost of reopening the upper road, such trails would dramatically enhance visitor experience and therefore visitation, boosting the local economy.

I urge you to reject any weakening of the Wilderness Act and throwing more good

taxpayer money after bad in order to reopen the Stehekin Road. Instead, please pursue funding for conversion of the upper road to trail and construction of new trails within the lower Stehekin Valley (the Lake Chelan Recreation Area).

This is a matter of concern not only to residents and property owners in Stehekin, like me, but also to all of your constituents in Washington state and to the nation, for whose enjoyment this area was set aside in 1968. Please let me know if I can offer any further information or assistance in this matter.

Sincerely,

Carolyn McConnell

Member, Board of Directors,
North Cascades Conservation Council

c: U.S. Senator Patty Murray

Chip Jenkins, Superintendent,
North Cascades National Park Complex

Household Phones Arrive in Stehekin

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then, astonishingly, in a clear contravention of NEPA, the Park reversed itself, apparently under advice of lawyers and possibly because of the intervention of Park Service higher-ups (Senator Maria Cantwell also made a small intervention in Weavtel's favor that may have played a role). However, the Park did make its approval of Weavtel's permit conditional on its receiving easements from private landowners whose property phone lines would cross.

When Weavtel revised its permit to use wireless technology, the Park properly issued a new Environment Assessment, requesting

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Wild Sky Wilderness Bill Passes House

RICK MCGUIRE

The Wild Sky Wilderness bill which would permanently protect 106,000 acres in the North Fork Skykomish and Beckler River watersheds north of Highway 2 in eastern Snohomish County has finally been passed by the full House of Representatives. The House passed it in late April not long after it was voted out of the Natural Resources committee, where former chairman Richard Pombo had kept it bottled up for years.

The Wild Sky has previously been passed by the Senate three times, and it is hoped that it can once again make it through sometime soon, sending it to the desk of President George W. Bush, who is expected to sign it. If enacted, the Wild Sky will be the first new Wilderness in Washington state for 23 years, and will protect extensive areas of lowland old-growth and second-growth forests, along with a significant mileage of salmon spawning streams, something almost totally missing from other Wilderness areas in the Cascades. NCCC is hopeful that the bill will have been enacted before the next issue of *The Wild Cascades* is out.

Phones Arrive in Stehekin

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public input. Those of us who provided input were shocked to discover that that process was in some ways irrelevant; phone service in the lower Stehekin Valley was installed before the EA was complete. The EA covered only the upper Stehekin Valley, where Weavtel lines would cross private property. Thus was private property sanctified and the public interest dismissed. Still, the upper valley is still phone-free as of this writing.

Let us not mourn but organize, or at least assess the lessons of this sorry story. Any law that is designed to provide for the public good must provide for democratic input. Any law that tries to compensate for market failings through subsidies must not allow private companies to administer those subsidies. Senator Cantwell, take heed.

Mountain Loop Opening Delayed, Possibly to 2008

The Herald — Everett, WA.
Monday, May 21, 2007

Environmentalist claims repairs by Forest Service put salmon at risk

BY LUKAS VELUSH,
HERALD WRITER

DARRINGTON — It's been more than three years since a massive flood blew out portions of the Mountain Loop Highway, closing the scenic dirt road that connected Darrington and Granite Falls.

Another flood in the fall caused more damage. That delayed until summer a reopening that was supposed to happen in the spring.

And now there may be more delays, perhaps into 2008.

The problem is connected to claims that a U.S. Forest Service road construction crew violated environmental rules in repairs it made last fall when salmon were building nests in the nearby South Fork Sauk River.

To hear the Forest Service tell it, the delay has more to do with studying new damage the river did to the road when it flooded in the fall.

The Forest Service crew is accused of working too close to nests of endangered Chinook salmon in November.

Such work only is allowed in August, when there are no salmon eggs that could be suffocated by sediment released into the water.

Bill Lider, a Lynnwood resident and member of the Pilchuck Audubon Society, said he found a Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest road construction crew working below the high-water mark just after the massive Election Day flood.

"If this was a developer down here in Snohomish County or King County, the (state) Department of Ecology would be all over them," he said.

Lider, a professional road engineer, fired off numerous letters accusing the Forest Service of failing to follow standard procedures for keeping erosion under control.

He wanted the agency to revisit and expand the environmental analysis it used to figure out how to properly fix the road.

He also believes the road is too prone to flood damage to be reopened.

"The Mountain Loop Highway continues to wash out faster than the Forest Service can repair it," Lider said.

Peter Forbes, district ranger at the Darrington Ranger Station, said Lider's complaints are "a matter of disagreement."

He said the Forest Service could have done a better job of communicating what it was doing on the road, but that it largely did nothing wrong. Forbes also said the agency was legally allowed to work into the fall because it was following regulations and staying above the river's high-water mark.

Still, the Forest Service this spring agreed to begin again its environmental review of the project, Forbes said.

He said the agency took that step because of additional flooding last fall, not in response to Lider.

The additional study may delay reopening of the road until 2008, but he's hopeful the work will be done by the end of summer.

Based in part on Lider's observations, the Forest Service did decide to seek additional training for crews, and to hire an outside expert to oversee its sediment control efforts.

"We'll be more aware of this in the future," Forbes said.

A U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service spokesman called Lider's critique of the Forest Service's road repair efforts "professional," and said the agency is studying each point he raised.

A state Department of Fish and Wildlife biologist said Lider was correct in maintaining the Forest Service violated environmental rules and a memorandum of understanding between the two agencies.

To make amends, the Forest Service should remove rocks the construction crew placed along the riverbank, state biologist Jeffrey Kamps wrote in an April letter. He said crews should do the work by hand, if possible.

Kamps provided the Forest Service with nearly four pages detailing work that he maintained was substandard and that may have allowed sediment to reach the river.

Forest Service work crews will stop work shortly, Forbes said, and won't start again until the new environmental review is finished.

Forbes said reopening the Mountain Loop Highway remains a priority.

"The link between Darrington and Granite Falls is very important to the communities," Forbes said.

Reporter Lukas Velush: 425-339-3449 or lvelush@heraldnet.com.

South Fork Tolt Land Exchange Possible

RICK MCGUIRE

The City of Seattle has expressed a desire to acquire the Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest (MB-SNF) lands in the upper end of the South Fork Tolt watershed east of Duvall and south of Mount Index. Currently about 70 percent of the 12,500-acre (13,300 by some sources), watershed is in city hands, having been acquired from Weyerhaeuser, which had removed almost every tree, in 1997. About 3700 acres, in the upper, eastern end are part of the MB-SNF. If those lands were transferred to City of Seattle ownership, it could mean that a number of critical private inholdings in adjacent parts of the MB-SNF might be acquired by the city as trading stock to exchange for the forest service lands in the Tolt. A similar process happened when the city acquired the national forest sections in the Cedar River watershed, and many important places were added to the MB-SNF as a result.

The South Fork Tolt watershed sits on the very western edge of the Cascades. The mountains surrounding it are prominent from Seattle, with the distinctive haystack shaped dome of Phelps Mountain visible on clear days to anyone looking directly east from Seattle's north end. The river was dammed in 1964, flooding about 2000 acres. According to the Seattle Public Utilities (SPU) website, where one can look at a series of pictures of the area rather grandly called a "virtual tour," the watershed supplies about 30 percent of the water supplied by SPU to Seattle and surrounding cities.

The South Fork Tolt watershed was almost totally stripped of forest in the 1960s and 1970s. In 1980 it was a moonscape, with multiple stacked roads traversing bare brown slopes extending from the reservoir on both sides all the way to the ridgetops. Bad as it was to see Seattle's watershed thus denuded, it was even more disconcerting to see the calm acceptance of it among the managerial staff, as if it were the most natural thing in the world to cut down just about every tree in a municipal watershed.

Just why Seattle wants to acquire the upper watershed is not clear, since just about every tree there that could be cut down has already been cut down, and there are few threats facing the lands which are part of the MB-SNF. But evidently they do want to acquire it, perhaps to exercise control and forbid public entry, as in the Cedar River watershed.

Funds for acquisition of national forest inholdings are limited, and almost all of those

appropriated in recent years have gone to the Interstate 90/Snoqualmie Pass corridor. City of Seattle acquisition of the upper Tolt watershed might provide the means to acquire a number of places in the U.S. Highway 2/Steves Pass corridor, where there has been no acquisitions money. This could mean that a number of critically endangered places, such as Maloney Creek, immediately south of the town of Skykomish, and the Buse Index property just south of the town of Index, might be acquired. Both of these places are high

The South Fork Tolt watershed was almost totally stripped of forest in the 1960s and 1970s. In 1980 it was a moonscape...

priorities for NCCC, and there are few or no other places where funding to acquire them might be found.

Land exchanges in the Cascades have gotten a mixed response in recent years because of the Plum Creek/I-90 and Weyerhaeuser/Huckleberry exchanges which happened six or seven years ago. Both of these exchanges brought significant and long-sought places into public ownership, but both were controversial because other national forest lands were traded to the timber industry where they faced immediate destruction. There is now a high degree of skepticism about land exchanges, and any new ones would no doubt be scrutinized closely.

Although the Tolt and Cedar river watersheds were hammered by clearcutting through the 1980s, the city of Seattle did have a change of heart about logging its watersheds in the 1990s. After the national forest lands in the

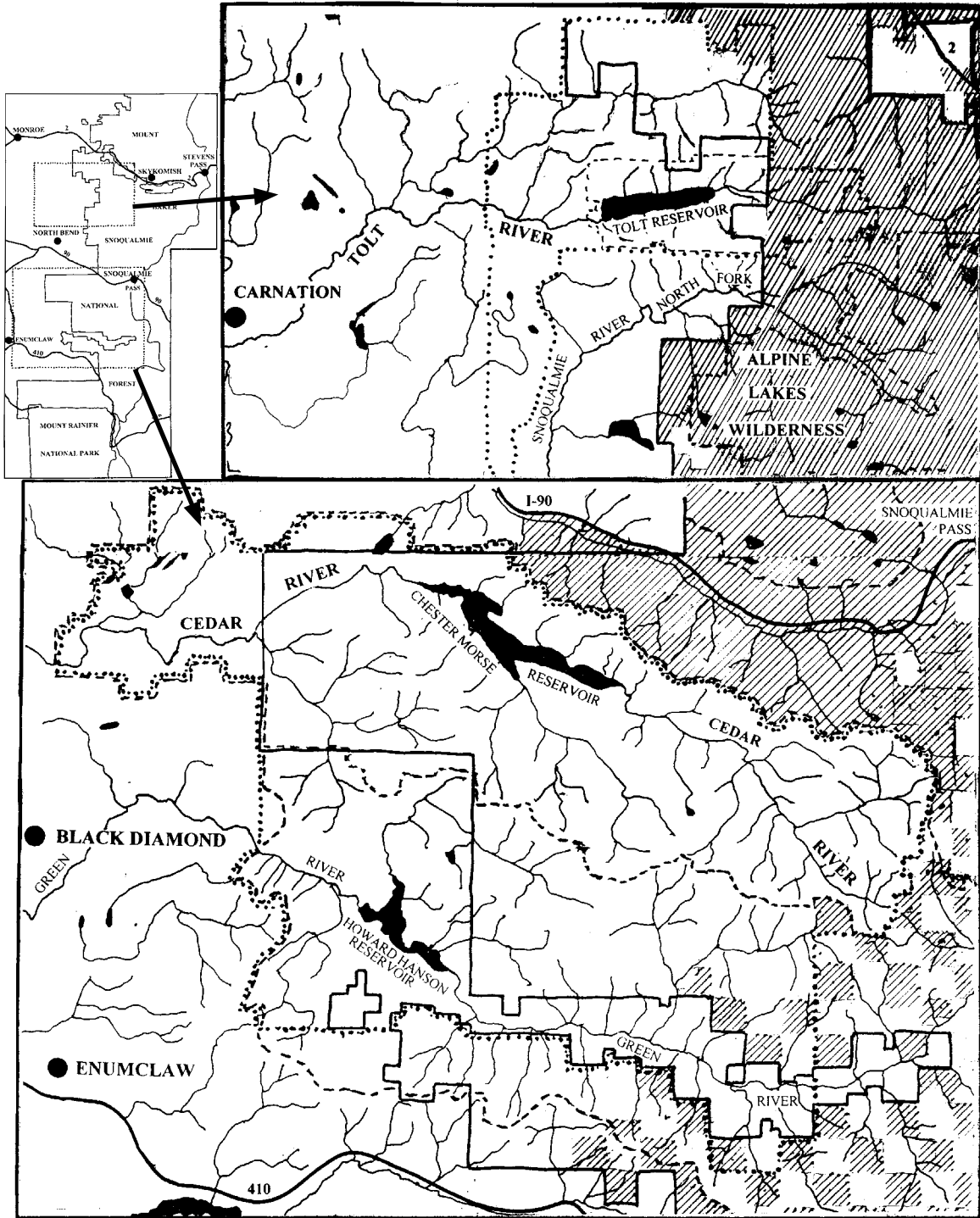
Cedar watershed were acquired in 1996, the city announced with much fanfare that there would be "no more logging" in the watershed. But as things turned out, it wasn't really "no logging," rather, "no logging — but."

Much of the 90,000-acre Cedar River watershed was logged in the early- to mid-twentieth century and has grown back with naturally regenerated, maturing second-growth forests, some of which are now quite impressive. The city has tried to sell "thinning" timber sales, which they claim will hasten the development of these second-growth forests into old-growth forest, but old-growth forests are formed by nature slowly, over long periods of time. The ridiculous idea that logging can speed the process has been discredited by the numerous thins which have been done on national forest lands with dismal results. Thinning has, however, been heavily promoted by the timber industry and by forestry schools, which are always trying to come up with new justifications for cutting trees.

Unfortunately the City of Seattle has taken up the idea. The rather large number of foresters, biologists, ecologists, and various other "ologists," employed at the Cedar River watershed have decided to try to prove that by selectively logging the second-growth forests there, they can turn them into old-growth forests faster and better than unassisted nature. Although these efforts have not been very extensive as of yet, and seem designed mostly to keep people employed, they are nonetheless troubling, and make a mockery of the supposed "no more logging" policy.

Whether or not NCCC and other conservation organizations could support a Tolt watershed exchange would depend on the fate of the national forest lands which would be traded to the City. If there was a high degree of certainty that the forests in the upper Tolt would not be logged, it would be much easier to support taking them out of national forest ownership. So far, the situation on the Cedar watershed doesn't offer much encouragement. There is a big difference between the "no logging" policy which was announced to the public, and the "no logging, but" policy in effect on the ground. The City of Seattle would need to guarantee that there would be a real "no logging" policy in the Tolt, if it wanted to garner broad public support for acquiring the national forest lands in that watershed.

City of Seattle Tolt and Cedar River watersheds, including City of Tacoma Green River watershed.



Seattle Reservoir Watershed — No public access •••••

Mt. Baker/Snoqualmie National Forest ——— / / / / /

— PATRICK GOLDSWORTH MAP

Joseph W. Miller

1915 – 2007



Joe and Margaret Miller 2005.

Personal Reflections of a Nonagenarian

*Four score and ten the years have passed;
In retrospect, they went so fast!
A happy childhood gone in a breath
With a loving mother's early death.
Fresh from sheltered college sessions,
Cast into the grip of the Great Depression.
At 26, career at last under way,
My draft board had another role for me to play.
From Private to Captain over four long years,
An English major transformed to combat engineer.
North Africa, Sicily, Omaha Beach,
Each helping bring victory within our reach.
At thirty-one I made the best move of my life:
Margaret Ann McAlpine became my wife.
Four new homes throughout the West
Left us convinced Washington State was best.
In 1970 we retired to new careers:
We became National Park research volunteers.
For twenty-five years we worked on a plan
To restore wild country from the impact of man.
Though aging body keeps me now from the
wilderness scene,
I visit these places still on memory's screen.
My legacy is that I restored wild lands
With years of work with mind and hands.*

—Joseph W. (Joe) Miller
Christmas card, 2005

Joe Put it All Together

NORTH CASCADES CONSERVATION COUNCIL

Board 1960 - 1994

Treasurer 1962 - 1994

NORTH CASCADES FOUNDATION

Board 1971 - 2003

Treasurer 1971 - 2003

A small group of outdoor lovers and enthusiastic hikers, we spent a week each year on the wilderness beach of Olympic National Park. We crunched the salty sands and explored the tide pools at lowest tides in July. We hopped along drift logs, climbed over rocks, and found glass floats from Japan. We brushed through the headland forests on elk trails — and Joe Miller was always in front with his movie camera, putting all of our activity on film.

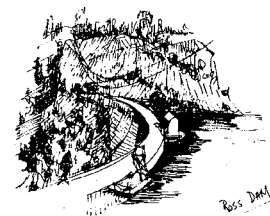
Later in the year, at evening work parties we would revisit these wonderful trips, viewing Joe's movies. These were during gatherings of North Cascade Conservation Council members at my house in North Seattle, where printed pages of *The Wild Cascades* were assembled, bound, and addressed for mailing. The pages were in successive piles on collapsible tables, which volunteers rounded, assembling the pages that were given to Joe who used a huge hand-operated stapler to bind them as he brought the journal together.

Joe fought endlessly (as the "Kaopectate Kid," who wrote in *The Wild Cascades*) to bring together all of the reasons why Seattle City Light should not raise Ross Dam on the Skagit River and flood the Big Beaver Valley of the new North Cascades National Park. He was justly critical of Washington State Governor Dixie Lee Ray for advocating the potential High Ross Dam.

Joe and Margaret Miller devoted untold energy and time to bringing back the vegetative health of damaged alpine regions of the North Cascades. Their eventual successful revegetation of Cascade Pass was a biological milestone that has served to promote the program throughout damaged regions of the national parks and national forests of the Cascades.

Please refer to Charles Ehlert's exceptional article in *The Wild Cascades* - Winter 2006 issue, which describes in greater detail Joe and Margaret's remarkable history.

— PATRICK D. GOLDSWORTHY



by *The Kerosene Kid*

Remembering Joe Miller

Joe Miller – hiker, climber, snowshoer, botanist, horticulturist, gardener, bird watcher, film maker, writer, poet, pamphleteer, administrator, platoon leader, soldier — died March 29, 2007, a few weeks short of his 92nd birthday. A Board member and Treasurer of NCCC for over 30 years. Joe, with Margaret, his wife and partner of nearly 60 years, were key figures in the important causes and battles of the NCCC during its first 50 years. Joe and Margaret did important volunteer work for NCCC and for the North Cascades National Park Complex for nearly forty years.

Originally from the flatlands of Missouri, Joe and Margaret arrived in the Northwest in 1957 and became deeply involved in the NCCC campaign to create a North Cascades National Park and the subsequent fight against Seattle City Light's juggernaut plan to raise Ross Dam. Joe made films of camping trips in the Sierras and the Stehekin Valley, the latter called "Family Camping In The North Cascades," and gave illustrated talks to scores of community and civic groups to generate awareness of the spectacular mountain wilderness in our back yard and support for the NCCC park proposal.

Later, during the 15-year-long High Ross Dam battle, he and Margaret spent two months over three summers camped in Big Beaver Valley doing an extensive survey of the previously unstudied flora and fauna of the valley which City Light wanted to drown, publishing their findings in a 1971 report entitled *A Preliminary Ecological Survey of Big Beaver Valley, North Cascades National Park*. Weeks more were spent at the request of Roger Contor, the first Superintendent of the NCNP, doing on-site surveys of stands of unusually large Western Redcedar in several remote North Cascades valleys, finding that the outstanding cedars of lower Big Beaver Valley — some up to 15 feet in diameter — best qualified for designation as a Research Natural Area. A 1970 report, *Phytosociological Reconnaissance of Western Redcedar Stands in Four Valleys of the North Cascades National Park Complex*, recorded their findings. Because of these efforts Joe and Margaret found themselves spending days in the witness chair in various hearings in the battle over High Ross Dam, presenting their findings while City Light lawyers tried unsuccessfully to discredit them as uncredentialed. The Park Service would later establish a 3,356-acre Big



From *The Wild Cascades*, Dec. 1969-Jan. 1970

Beaver Creek Research Natural Area in the lower Big Beaver valley, where the Millers had recommended.

Joe and Margaret, through trial and error, became the experts on revegetation of over-used subalpine terrain. In the early 1970s they developed a successful method of revegetating the trampled subalpine meadows at Cascade Pass, involving propagation of cuttings in greenhouses, at first at their Bellevue home and later at the NPS headquarters at Marblemount, and backpacking the rooted plants back to Cascade Pass, making dozens of trips, every summer for twenty-five years. They also put on revegetation workshops for NPS personnel at other beaten up locations. When you go to Cascade Pass now and see green meadows and wildflowers instead of a series of dusty tent sites and boot paths, it's because of the work of Joe and Margaret Miller.

Another project they took on at Roger Contor's request was a study of plant succession after fires in several remote North Cascades valleys, followed by still another report, *Succession After Wildfire in the North Cascades National Park Complex*.

Joe and Margaret participated as NCCC representatives in the mitigation talks in connection with federal relicensing of City Light's Skagit dams. They spent their 50th wedding anniversary with an Elderhostel service project on hands and knees revegetating a barren site on the South Rim of the Grand Canyon.

Joe was a founder, board member and officer of the North Cascades Foundation and the Washington Native Plant Society.

Fewer people knew of Joe's service during World War II as an Army combat engineer, disarming German mines and building roads and bridges, often under fire — a very hazardous line of work — which took him to the Allied landings in North Africa, Sicily and Omaha Beach on D-Day. He was more likely to talk about the giant cedars and beaver ponds in Big Beaver Valley than about his Bronze Star and eight battle stars. Still less about the soldiers in his platoon who would make it through the Normandy landing alive because of his courage and leadership, standing up under intense German fire and calling to his men, pinned down on the beach, to "Come on you bastards! We're all going to die if we stay here!" On June 6, 1944.

I remember Joe's lively sense of humor, sometimes acerbic, sometimes whimsical. As the "Kerosene Kid" and later the "Kaopectate Kid", his irreverent commentaries and cartoons in *The Wild Cascades* poking fun at Governor Dixy Lee Ray, notable for her hostility to wilderness and environmental concerns, reportedly led Her Honor to consider suing him, which she was dissuaded from doing (depriving future legal treasure hunters of a case in the permanent court archives captioned *Dixy Lee Ray vs. The Kaopectate Kid*). Hearing someone mention "The Holy Land" once, Joe commented that "I thought it was all holy".

Joe's modest manner tended to hide his many and varied talents, his uncommon courage and the strength of his determination. He was a man not easily deterred by obstacles from doing what he set out to do. Like the flowers and meadows he so loved, he could push his way quietly through concrete.

With Margaret, Joe shared a deep sense of love for nature — for wildflowers, meadows, trees, birds, streams and mountains — and a deep commitment to preserving it. It is sometimes said of World War II vets that they "saved the world". For Joe Miller, saving the world was a life-long pursuit.

A life well lived.

Goodbye old friend.

—CHARLES EHLERT

In Tribute to a Humble Human

It is hard to think about Joe without thinking about Margaret. They are such a team and surely Joe's passing leaves his team bereft. All our sympathy and support to Margaret.

Once someone is gone, I start to wonder what I really know of that person. Joe was one of the first people I met as a new recruit to NCCC's *The Wild Cascades* assembly parties at Patrick and Jane Goldworthy's. As a high school student I was awed to be in the company of people like Joe. Joe certainly put me at ease with his "aw shucks" sort of personality. Even then, I recognized that Joe was a much more complex person than he was willing to admit. But when I look back over what is now some 45 years later, I realize that Joe might be seen as having the quintessential qualities that I value in many a NCCC Board member. What are the qualities he exemplifies? Humility (it's not about me, it's about saving the Cas-

cadetes); Resistance (we will fight for what is right until the end and then never give up); Ability to learn and retool (how do you convert a sophisticated financial accountant into a bean counter for the environment? Joe figured it out); Ability to speak truth to power (when riled up, challenging the conventional wisdom with empirical facts); Geniality (how can you smile and converse in a friendly manner when what you want to do is to "sue the bastards"?); Joe was often able to get opponents to "go along" once they understood).

Fast forward to the Seattle City Light relicensing process for its Skagit River Projects. After heroic efforts of our legal team, we did not prevail in the US Supreme Court (read our *Wilderness Alps* book for details) but NCCC raised enough ruckus that it took a Federal Energy Regulatory Commission order to restart the process. And process it was. NCCC and other intervenors working

with Seattle City Light had to work together to identify continuing environmental impacts of the dams. Joe and Margaret were the NCCC team that took on all manner of restoration activities, from roadsides to lakesides. The decades of experience with plant propagation for restoration of the Millers set the standard for what was eventually agreed. When you visit Cascade Pass and find it intact you can thank the Millers. When you drive the North Golly Danged Highway along the electrical transmission corridor and notice low-growing native plants providing vegetative cover and connectivity for wildlife under the powerlines instead of clearcuts and herbicided wastelands, you can thank the Millers.

Joe took off early. Margaret, we're glad you remain to carry on the Miller green tradition.

— DAVE FLUHARTY

Joe and Margaret Miller — In Recognition

Joe and Margaret Miller, in so many ways gave full devotion to glorifying and fostering the preservation of the wild world of our region's native flora. Self-taught was their expert knowledge of our plant world. When Ross Dam was threatened to be raised, to flood pristine old-growth cedar in Big Beaver Valley, they mounted a floristic survey of the drainage. Their meticulous inventory of the area destined to be flooded was a key and decisive contribution to stop that travesty. Their masterful account of the Valley's biota has become a paradigm of gathering evidence in the wild to preserve a great piece of nature.

The Millers also pioneered a new kind of preservation in the montane West. Cascade Pass was being loved to death, its flora being trampled to near extinction. The Millers convinced the Park Service that restoration of the Pass area could be done by propagating starts of local native species for reintroduction to the disturbed sites. They established a plant nursery near Newhalem and

packed the propagules back to the Pass for planting. This successful venture now has been repeated all over the montane West. The Millers started habitat restoration.

Joe and Margaret were early active members of the Washington Native Plant Society (WNPS). Joe was president early on. The Millers also initiated an annual plant sale for WNPS members at their Bellevue home. This pioneering effort continues, now at the Bellevue Botanic Garden, an institution also fostered by the Millers.

Although Joe is no longer with us, we thank him, as well as Margaret, for their deep devotion to wilderness, their works its living evidence.

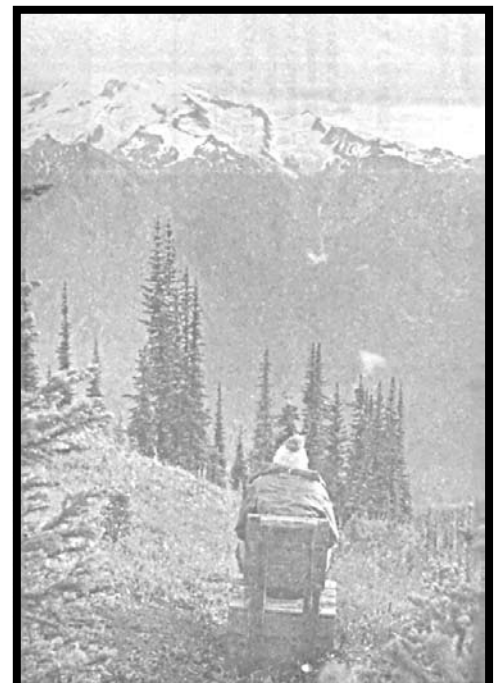
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—ART KRUCKEBERG



The Wild Cascades, Fall-Winter 1978-1979

kaopectate kid
on the throne

Glacier Peak Wilderness

To Thin or Not to Thin, That Is the Question

BRUCE BARNBAUM

A debate has been going on for some time about the benefits or abominations of thinning second-growth forests — also known as selective cutting—to speed up their recovery to old growth. According to some, selectively cutting out trees in a second-growth forest opens it up, allowing trees to spread out, grow thicker boles, and be healthier. According to others, cutting down trees is no way to promote regrowth of a forest.

The science behind thinning ... and the funding behind the science

Proponents of thinning point to as much as 20 years of scientific evidence showing that thinning of forests is, indeed, effective to spur greater growth and speed the process along toward old-growth status. But before we get too excited about the science behind the thinning, we should look into the funding behind the science

Most forestry schools within the land grant (i.e., public colleges and universities) are heavily funded by major timber companies. This, in itself, should make one wonder about the conclusions of their scientific observations and experiments. Would you believe scientific studies about the health benefits of tobacco were they funded by the tobacco industry? (Of course that's exactly what happened 30 years ago.) I think you would be more than a bit skeptical about such conclusions, and your skepticism would be well placed. How about energy studies funded by oil companies? Then, of course, there are studies about the anti-oxidant and heart benefits of chocolate. Well, let us ignore that one, because those conclusions are ones I can certainly get behind

But when it comes to forests, who benefits from scientific conclusions that allege thinning to be beneficial to the forest? The people taking out the trees, that's who.

Theory vs. Practice

The biggest problem is that there always seems to be a major gap between the theory of forest thinning and the actual practice of forest thinning. Years ago I went on a short tour of varied forestry practices within the state of Washington. We visited — of all places — Fort Lewis, south of Tacoma. We were taken into a forested portion of the military base that was populated by immense Douglas fir trees, some as much as 5 – 7 feet in diameter, maybe more. We were told that the military had just completed a thinning cut of the forest. But nobody in the group could find signs of trees that had been cut. It appeared to be untouched. It was beautiful, and it was astounding to see on the military site.

We continued walking through the forest to the boundary of the fort, where it bumped up against land owned by the State Department of Natural Resources (DNR). We were told that DNR had just completed a thinning cut on its land. But all we saw was devastation. There wasn't a standing tree in sight. Both were listed as "thinning cuts." It is evident that the term can be applied to such a broad spectrum of forest practices that the term itself becomes meaningless. It is like the Bible: you can interpret that term any way that suits your purposes.

In other thinning cuts I have seen, the devastation has been widespread. Thinning cuts in young forests (i.e., those that were clearcut and replanted) — generally to a monoculture of the fastest growing tree species the land can support—tend to be chop jobs of the highest order. Near my home on the Mountain Loop Highway in Snohomish County, the logging company, Trilium, did a thinning cut a year ago of trees approximately 15 years of age. (That Trilium property, by the way, has recently been transferred to the DNR, as a result of a land swap between the two.) As a result of the thinning, it is nearly impossible to walk as much as 15 feet into the plantation, for all the chopped down trees are laying like pickup sticks stacked 3-6 feet high, many leaning against living trees, others hung up in living trees. They form an immense impenetrable mat that would be virtually impossible for any wildlife larger than a mouse to navigate through. They also form an extreme fire hazard, as the wood dries in mid-air. Furthermore, the area has become a haven for invasive plants such as European blackberries, and Scotch broom among other invasives. It is a dreadful mess.

What about thinning in older forests? In older forests the cut trees are pulled out because they have commercial value, unlike the 5-7" diameter bases in the younger plantations. So the felled trees don't lay there as barriers to wildlife, nor as fire hazards. But other problems surface. Forests 40 - 70 years of age have trees large enough to seriously damage standing trees on their way down, sometimes fatally. The yarding (i.e., removal) of them often scars standing trees, sometimes fatally. New roads have to be built for equipment and log-truck access to the felled trees, which compacts the land significantly, severely stunting the growth of new trees on the roadbeds (assuming trees will be planted on the roadbeds).

But even worse than the damage is the fact that once trees grow large enough to attain commercial value, the practice of thinning

to "grow" the bottom line always trumps the theory of thinning to speed old-growth status. It's the money that counts, stupid! Generally the largest diameter trees are removed, leaving the tall skinny trees standing. To spur old growth it should be the other way around, but skinny trees have little commercial value, so they stay, while the others are taken. Beyond that, once the canopy is broken by thinning, the trees become far more vulnerable to wind-throw. Thus, an ugly, vulnerable scattering of trees remains. This is no way to speed your way toward old growth.

Can thinning be of value?

I believe it can be, and there is even an example to prove it. Merv Wilkinson purchased 500 acres of old-growth forest near Ladysmith, Vancouver Island in 1936, and has been logging it ever since, preserving the old-growth forest throughout that time. If his methods are continued into the future, the land will remain old-growth forest forever. It seems that Wilkinson's methods could be modified for successful thinning of second-growth forests with an eye toward speeding up their transition to old growth.

Here's what Wilkinson has done. Every five years he has a major cut, taking out a few old giants, some mid-sized trees, and a lot of young trees. (Between the major cuts, he does non-commercial "pruning cuts" each year, employing the same loggers on his property year after year. This is important because in a typical clearcut regimen, a logger will never set foot on that land again in his working lifetime.) He reports that he gets higher prices for his trees than that of any of the typical commercial clearcut operations near him. His first cut was along lines that became permanent logging/yarding roads, so he's never had to put a penny into further road building. Dividing his initial cost of road-building by the number of times he's done major cuts, he has lowered his cost to less than 25¢/linear foot of road. In typical logging operations, road building is the highest cost of all.

The second highest cost of logging is replanting. Merv Wilkinson has never planted a tree. It's all self-seeding from the healthy standing forest. The third highest cost is pesticide control. He has never used pesticides. In essence, Wilkinson is practicing model thinning every five years, in which he takes out the equivalent number of board feet that grow during those five years. As he puts it, he takes out the interest, leaving the principle intact.

Continued on page 15

Blanchard Mountain, or Issaquah Alps by the Sea

KEN WILCOX

Washington Land Commissioner Doug Sutherland continues to push for upping the cut at Blanchard Mountain, a 4,800-acre block of spectacular coastal forest in the Chuckanut Range near Bellingham. The area is heavily used by hikers, horses and hanggliders, and hosts the only coastal forest nesting habitat for marbled murrelets anywhere in the greater Puget Sound region. The area is the largest surviving block of maturing coastal forest left along the entire mainland shore of Washington's inland sea.

The DNR's timber plan was issued a Determination of Non-Significance (DNS) in late April that claimed no serious harm would come to anyone or anything as a result of implementing the plan. The Chuckanut Conservancy, North Cascades Conservation Council, North Cascades Audubon Society, Sierra Club's Mount Baker Group, Bellingham Mountaineers, Coast Watch Society and others strongly disagreed and filed a joint 14-page comment letter in late May. (You can read the letter at www.chuckanutconservancy.org.)

None of these groups — and none of the many user groups in the area, with the exception of the Backcountry Horsemen — were invited to participate in developing the plan.

According to the DNR's proposed logging plan it's all about "balancing environmental, social and economic values." However, virtually no supporting information, no new data or analyses were provided to back up this sweeping statement. Almost none of the experts who are familiar with those values at Blanchard Mountain were consulted. Even the expertise within other state and federal resource agencies were not consulted. Instead, outdated, incomplete, and misleading studies and reports from the past were relied upon to justify the plan.

Substantial economic benefits to local economies that could derive from a conservation-based (rather than logging-based) plan were virtually ignored by the DNR. A bipartisan group proposing a new park and recreation district for the Chuckanuts extended an olive branch and the promise of financial support

to DNR to help cover some of the costs of not logging. They too were dismissed out of hand.

The process was clearly driven by timber interests, despite the set-aside of a small "core area" and fluffy claims about "balance." Nevertheless, all the happy talk and a well oiled media machine has been enough to convince the Legislature to earmark \$4 million to begin implementing the plan, despite widespread objection to both the process and the results. The DNR may be resting its political laurels on backing from Conservation Northwest, a group prominently mentioned in press releases.

The DNR has delayed issuance of a final DNS in response to the comments received. If Sutherland moves forward, as expected, appeals and court action are likely in the not-too-distant future. *The Wild Cascades* will continue to provide updates, or visit www.chuckanutconservancy.org to learn more or to contribute to the cause.

Montanan Named Supervisor of Okanogan and Wenatchee National Forests

PORTLAND, Ore. — The new Supervisor of the 4.1 million-acre Okanogan and Wenatchee National Forests will be Becki J. Heath, current Supervisor of the Gallatin National Forest in Montana, Forest Service Regional Forester Linda Goodman announced today.

The assignment will be a homecoming for Heath, who served as Leavenworth District Ranger on the Wenatchee National Forest in the 1990s. She will replace current Forest Supervisor James L. Boynton, who has announced plans to retire at the end of July.

"Becki Heath will be a perfect fit for the Okanogan and Wenatchee National Forests," Goodman said. "She is a seasoned Forest

Supervisor with a strong commitment to public service. She has extensive background in natural resource management and has shown superb leadership handling complex wildland fires."

Heath is a career Forest Service employee who began working for the agency in 1977. She graduated from Oregon State University in 1976 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Recreation and Environmental Education. In 1979 she obtained a Master of Science degree in Forest Management from the University of Washington. Her early years with the Forest Service were spent on the Mount Hood, Ochoco, and Umatilla National Forests in

Oregon and included positions in timber management and silviculture.

She served as Leavenworth District Ranger from 1990 until 1999. While at Leavenworth, Heath gave special attention to watershed analysis and restoration, natural resource education, public involvement, recreation, and fire suppression.

Heath and her husband, Monty, have one son, Evan, 18 years old. Monty Heath is a retired Forest Service recreation program manager. Becki Heath will begin her new job in Wenatchee on August 6.

To Thin or Not to Thin

Continued from page 14

But Wilkinson knows every square foot of his forest, so it's thoroughly managed with great care, the kind of care normally absent in commercial clearcuts or thins. I'm unaware of any such operation by a major timber company, by the state DNR, or by the USFS.

Wilkinson has proved that it can be done, but it requires immense time, energy, love and understanding, qualities that are sorely lacking in the three groups named above. Until those groups can prove that they are not only interested in selective logging — true thinning of a forest for the benefit of the forest

rather than the benefit of the shareholders or the schools or the local mills — and can also prove that they are capable of such sensitive thinning, it would be wise to remain skeptical . . . perhaps even to raise skepticism to the point of cynicism.

LooWit

Mount St. Helens Mine Threat

TOM HAMMOND

[Note: I wrote this report last year as an article of geologic interest — a demonstration, if you will, of the passions that drive me and fellow board members of the NCCC. Since that time it has come to our attention that the call to conservation action is heard once again, and on the immediate periphery of the Mount St. Helens National Volcanic Monument. First the fun, then the work.]

While the focus of the North Cascades Conservation Council is primarily in the area north from Snoqualmie Pass, our charter and mission covers the entire state. As such, it was with great excitement that I accepted a kind invitation from fellow board member Ken Wilcox to climb LooWit (Mount St. Helens) the day after the USFS opened it up to climbing (July 23, 2006). It had been closed to climbing since the latest eruption began October 11, 2004. United States Geological Survey (USGS) geologists and the USFS have decided the mountain is safe enough despite the fact it is currently active and indeed, is erupting, so they are offering a limited permitting system (100 per day). The permits came available Saturday, and Ken secured some for Sunday.

It has been just over 16 years since I last visited the crater rim, and what a difference: In a span of 21 months, three new lava domes have totally overtopped the existing 300-meter-high dome to the point that the highest section is close to reaching the existing rim in height — some 500 meters of growth. USGS geologists report it is growing by the equivalent of a large dump truck worth every five seconds. I believe it. Over our three and a half hours on the summit, the dome cracked and peeled huge amounts of rock several times. Two events were earthshaking, sending tons of rock down to cover a section of the glacier, and filling half of the mile-wide crater with smoke and dust. So impressive were they that two parties of climbers headed down, fearful that a larger event was underway. Of course, that is the exact reason I stayed at the rim for as long as I did.

In 2005 alone, the volcano erupted more than 70 million cubic meters of new material. Geologists figure that if the rate of extrusion continues, the mountain will rebuild itself to pre-1980 height/size in less than 100 years. As we gazed out at the neighboring volcanoes, particularly Tahoma (Mount Rainier) and PahTo (Mount Adams), it struck me that they exhibit the same multi-summitted construction of a composite cone that we witnessed at our

feet. The form and outline of the volcanoes we are so familiar with are in reality constructs of many eruptive events over time. Looking at the exposed cross-section of about 4,000 years of growth on LooWit helped the effect — layer upon layer of red rock, black rock, ash, pumice, and tephra make for a vivid, undeniable testament to the passage of time. It is such a gift to be able to watch the process in real time — a window to time scales and processes that far exceed our lifetimes.

Equally impressive is the new glacier(s). In 1989 it was tiny, and until 2004 it was contiguous, but the new dome is pushing up at the south side of the crater and has split the glacier. Now it is comprised of two thick lobes — each more than 2,000 feet thick — that are layered with rock and debris. I should note this is the only glacier (now glaciers) that I am aware of in the state showing positive mass-balance. This is due to the location: the mountain creates orographic lift, and more importantly forms a catchment for avalanching snows, the snow/ice is then protected from the sun by the crater walls, and rock falling on top. According to a geomorphologist who happened to be up there, this is the only place on planet Earth where glacier ice and an active, erupting volcano are in direct contact.

All of the life-forms in the area are exhibiting tremendous growth, and rebirth. Flora and fauna are returning at a staggering rate, demonstrating that “catastrophes” are a part of life, and the evolution of our planet. Dr. John Edwards, professor, University of Washington, and NCCC board member, is measuring the return of certain arthropods (insects and spiders) to the mountain. The amount of research and discovery occurring at the growing volcano is incredible, and far too much to cover here. Please see the website below for a wealth of information on our active volcano.

http://vulcan.wr.usgs.gov/Volcanoes/MSH/Recovery/research_projects.html

And now the work:

Idaho General Mines (IGMI), out of Spokane, Washington, hopes to develop a 3,000-acre mine to extract copper, gold, molybdenum, and silver in the Green River valley below Goat Mountain, which lies just north and east of Mount St. Helens National Volcanic Monument. With your help, this mine proposal will not see the light of day.

Much of the area under consideration for the mine was purchased by the Trust for Pub-

lic Lands using Land and Water Conservation Funds — funds which were appropriated by Congress to be used for recreation and conservation purposes, not for mining. The Trust for Public Lands obtained this land and turned it over to the US Forest Service for the purpose of protecting it from mining. Instead, in a betrayal of the public in general, and the conservation community in particular, the BLM and FS recently released an Environmental Assessment outlining their preliminary decision to grant a lease to Idaho General Mines for land north of Mount St. Helens. This is the first step in a process that could result in a huge mine within the blast zone of Mount St. Helens.

The lease area enters the Tumwater Inventoried Roadless Area, an area intended for protection under the immensely popular 2001 Roadless Rule.

Granting of this lease will open the door to eventual mine development and the federal government must assess the likely impacts from such development. A large copper mine at the edge of the Mount St. Helens blast zone and in a seismically active region poses a serious risk of releasing toxins that could devastate threatened fish runs and contaminate community drinking water supplies downstream. Moreover, a mine will likely impact ancient forests, the Tumwater Inventory Roadless Area, and popular recreation areas. The bedrock in the Green River valley is such that when it is exposed to air and water during mining, a chemical process called acid mine drainage could occur, leaching sulfuric acid and other highly toxic substances into surrounding water bodies. Once this chemical process begins, it can last for thousands of years and could cost many millions of dollars to manage.

A dam that would likely be constructed to hold back stored waste material, such as cyanide and arsenic, could fail in the seismically active region, releasing in a flash tons of toxic substances into the Green River. The Green River, spawning habitat for listed salmon and steelhead, eventually flows into the Cowlitz River where it is withdrawn for agricultural and municipal water supplies.

As one might imagine, placing a highly toxic mine next to an active, erupting volcano is not the best plan. Consideration of placing a mine here is not only a violation of trust and agreements with land conservationists, but it flies in the face of common sense. The

Bureau of Land Management and Forest Service should honor the congressional intent using Land and Water Conservation Funds — funds which were appropriated by Congress to be used for recreation and conservation purposes, not for mining, and not lease the land to a mining company

Contact your congressional representatives, the representative in the area, Mr. Brian Baird, the FS and BLM, and let your voices be heard on what you think of the planned mine. For the project itself, submit comments to:

U.S. Department of Interior
 Attn: Fred O'Ferrall
 Bureau of Land Management,
 Oregon State Office
 P.O. Box 2965
 Portland, OR 97208
 E-mail: Eric_Hoffman@or.blm.gov

You can view the Environmental Assessment at www.blm.gov/or/index.php.

Also, if you would like to be added to the list serve specific to this issue just send an e-mail to: stopsthelensmine-subscribe@lists.gptaskforce.org

Ryan Hunter of the Gifford-Pinchot Task Force contributed to this article, and we owe him and the GPTaskForce our thanks for their efforts on this, and other conservation issues in SW Washington.

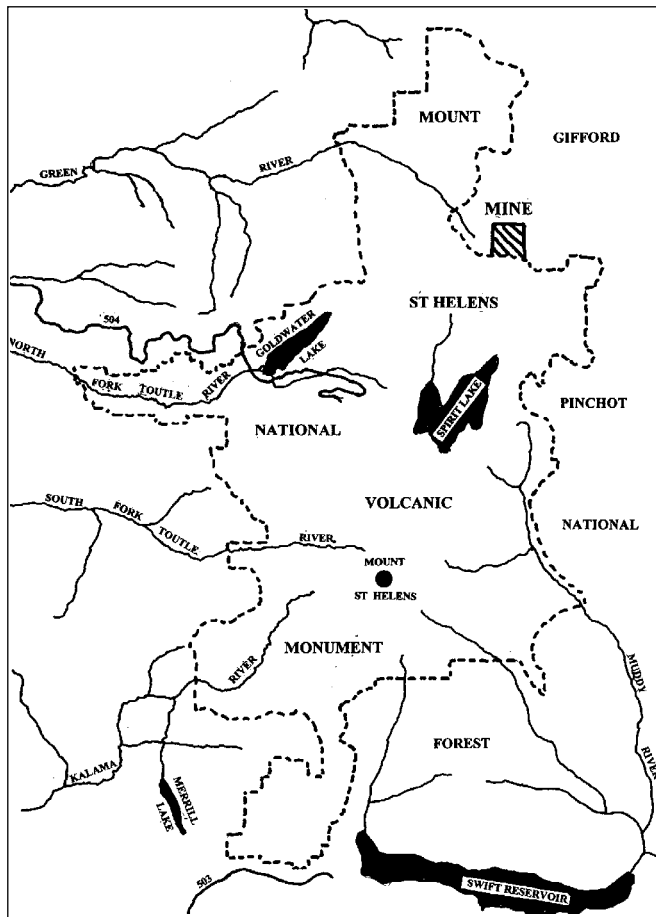


A view of the east side of the crater — note the composite nature of the volcano indicated by the layering of materials. Also note the massive raft of logs on Spirit Lake.



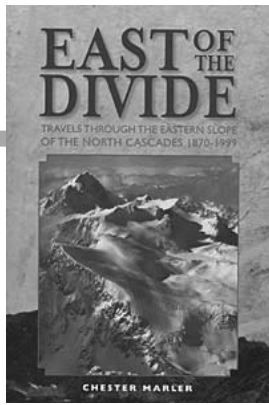
A huge plume of smoke and dust rises as the dome-building process sends tons of rock down the flanks of the emerging mountain. Note the rock covered glacier — the entire area between the dome and the crater wall is ice up to 2,000 feet thick.

— TOM HAMMOND PHOTOS



— PATRICK GOLDSWORTHY MAP

Mt. St. Helens National Monument: mine location.



BOOK REVIEW

JOHN EDWARDS

East of the Divide

Chester Marler

North Fork Books, 2004, 293 pp
\$14.95

East of the Divide is a delightful, easy read, a mixture of history and personal reminiscence. Stories of early figures in the exploration of mountains east of the divide from the Stuart Range to the Canadian border — larch country — are interspersed with vivid evocations of the author's many years and many miles in the eastern North Cascades. His stamping ground encompasses the upper reaches and headwaters of the Wenatchee, Entiat, Chelan and Methow Rivers and the peaks and passes that culminate the eastern slopes of the North Cascades. Marler's treatment is as personal as Fred Beckey's Range of Glaciers is encyclopedic; they are complementary. It is especially interesting to compare their respective accounts of Daniel Linsley's and Hal Sylvester's early mountain explorations. Marler's account of a remarkable journey in 1906 by C. E. Rush, an accomplished climber, and A. L. Cool, a round trip from near Lake Chelan over Cloudy, Suiattle, and Buck Creek passes to the eastern flank of Glacier Peak, their route for the second ascent, and back through the Entiat Mountains makes vivid reading. Another epic concerns the enigmatic "Miss Wheeler" whose 32-day, 300-mile solo journey with a packhorse is recounted. She started from the Little Wenatchee River, and thence through the Upper Stehekin to the Pasayten. From near the Canadian border she headed west into the Skagit, crossing Buck Creek Pass and returning to Lake Wenatchee. She sent her diary to the supervisor of the (then) Chelan National Forest where it remained in their records unpublished, until Marler brought her epic to us. These historical gems add to Marler's accounts of his many trips.

There is no mistaking his deep identification with the eastern North Cascades. He has the knack of evoking the feelings that landscape inspires. But this is not simply a reminiscence. He comments in the introduction, "The existence of intact wildland is

acknowledged as fundamental for our species to continue a life of diversity — intellectually, emotionally and biologically. Throughout, my intent is to focus on the genuine experience, feelings and thoughts one can have in the mountain world of the Cascades." He succeeds in that aim. I especially liked his concluding chapter with its philosophical musings on our place in Nature. He observes in closing, "Even though the human-created world is filled with fascination, excitement and beauty, its relevance to us does not diminish the need to look in another direction, as well. A synthesis of multiple points of view allows one to become absorbed, for example, in the music of Bach, and later turn, in a complementary way, to thought and memories of wildland experiences. The two are not conflicting points of departure. Rather each provides a rich texture for human engagement".

The book has numerous fine black and white photographs, many of them by the author, some of them unfortunately printed too dark. It is a richly rewarding treatment of travel in the eastern North Cascades. Read it.

NCCC Now Tax Exempt 501(C)(3) Organization

Contributions to the NCCC are now fully deductible by donors.

The new status was granted by the IRS on April 23, 2007, and is retroactively effective as of December 15, 2006. The Council's application to alter its status from a section (c)(4) to a (c)(3) entity, was prepared by Board members Karl Forsgaard, Charles Ehlert, and Tom Brucker. Doug Raff, of the law firm of Riddell, Williams, donated countless hours of expertise to insure the application conformed to statutory requirements. While 501(c)(4) organizations are exempt from federal taxation, only contributions to (c)(3) entities can be deducted on the donor's tax return.

The Council qualified for its current status because its purpose is primarily educational and scientific, and not political. Only if a substantial part of an organization's activities are devoted to influencing legislation will it lose its (c)(3) status. Meeting with non-legislative governmental employees, as does the NCCC, is not considered attempting to influence legislation, and thus not political.

NCCC Objects to Increasing Motorization of Wilderness

NCCC has recently written to the Forest Service objecting to the use of motorized equipment and helicopters to repair the Pacific Crest Trail in the Suiattle — Milk Creek area of the Glacier Peak Wilderness.

Originally, motorized equipment was supposed to be used only as a last resort for Wilderness trail work. But what was once supposed to be the exception grew common, and has now become virtually the only option even considered by the Forest Service, which no longer considers such actions as worthy of any environmental assessment. Opportunities for contractors who practice "minimum tool" use have dried up, and the skill base for doing such work is vanishing because of that. There are now few opportunities for traditional trail crew packers, and helicopter use has become routine, not just for trail repair work but for just about anything. Recently permission was granted to use helicopters to gather mountain goat wool in the Glacier Peak Wilderness.

NCCC is asking the Forest Service to consider letting at least one contract for a skilled packer as part of this latest effort, in hopes that it will not soon become a lost art. The Forest Service has tended to lose court cases when they have been challenged about their routine use of motors in Wilderness. NCCC may consider such action at some point if this trend continues, which it shows every sign of doing. Increasingly, the Forest Service views the Wilderness Act as a nuisance, and something to be ignored if inconvenient. NCCC hopes that at least some semblance of non-motorized, minimum tool use can be salvaged in the Wilderness areas of the North Cascades.

NCCC Celebrates 50 Years of Environmental Activism

The North Cascades Conservation Council recently celebrated with a birthday party — 50 years of involvement in the North Cascades. On March 23, 2007, a packed house of members, friends, and supporters enjoyed an evening of reminiscences, renewing old friendships, general good cheer, and a pledge to continue the fight to preserve, protect, and defend the North Cascades.



Charles Ehlert, Margaret Miller, Laura Zalesky, Phil Zalesky, and Kris Berger.
— KEN WILCOX PHOTO

Board members Polly Dyer, Phil Zalesky, and Chairman Pat Goldsworthy, who were foremost among those who formed the NCCC in March of 1957, recounted the impetus for the creation of the organization, which was essentially the refusal of the Forest Service to recognize the outstanding values contained in the North Cascades.

What began with a small group of determined individuals soon turned into a groundswell of support that resulted, as we all know, in the creation of the North Cascades National Park. Two giants of the conservation movement, both of whom

started their careers in the Northwest, stirred the attendees with recollections of the early efforts to preserve the North Cascades. Mike McCloskey, formerly the Executive Director of the Sierra Club, was the first field director for that organization and the Federation of Western Outdoor Clubs, and the Northwest states were his territory. He described one of his big challenges was to negotiate boundar-

ies for the future park. Next, Brock Evans, a former Board member of the Council, who also got his environmental start as the third Sierra Club field representative in the Northwest, related the many contributions of individuals who created the national support for the Park, and gave his vision for continuing to achieve conservation goals. Past accomplishments of the Council, in addition to the Park were also noted: establishing large wilderness areas in the Park, defeating Seattle City Light's effort to raise Ross Dam and the significant events that occurred after that decision in the Relicensing proceedings for that dam, other litigation preventing the Forest Service from construction of destructive motorcycle pathways in the Cascades, and publication of the Council's journal, *The Wild Cascades*.

The evening concluded with Board member David Fluharty's call to reaffirm the Council's dedication to preserve, protect and defend the North Cascades.



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

The North Cascades Conservation Council depends on your support!

Name _____ Address _____

Email (opt) _____ City/St/Zip _____

I'd like to volunteer! Contact me.

Please send me occasional action alerts and news of upcoming events by email — approximately one email per month (we do not sell addresses to anyone).

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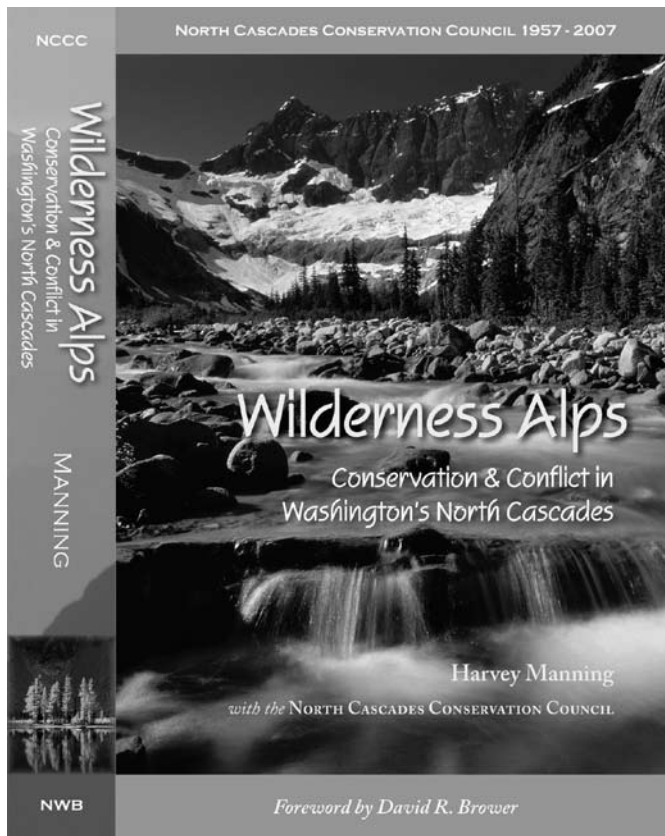
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Membership includes subscription to NCCC's excellent journal, *The Wild Cascades*.

NCCC is a 501(c)(3) organization. All donations are tax deductible. Send check or money order and this form to:
 Laura Zalesky, Membership Chair, 2433 Del Campo Drive, Everett, WA 98208.

Wilderness Alps

A must-read for all who value America's wilderness and national parks!



Wilderness Alps is the story of wilderness preservation and national park politics in one of North America's most magnificent wildernesses, the North Cascades.

Wilderness Alps: Conservation and Conflict in Washington's North Cascades, by Harvey Manning and the North Cascades Conservation Council. 480 pages, with historic maps and photos and 32 pages of color images, including the work of photographers Pat O'Hara, Dave Schiefelbein, and Tom Hammond. Edited by Ken Wilcox.

Cover price: \$24.95 (ISBN-13: 978-0-9793333-0-9)

Published in March 2007 by Northwest Wild Books

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