

THE WILD CASCADES

THE JOURNAL OF THE NORTH CASCADES CONSERVATION COUNCIL SUMMER/FALL 2010



THE WILD CASCADES ■ Summer/Fall 2010

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COVER: Polly Dyer, left, and Margaret Miller prior to their historic hike to Cascade Pass. — TOM HAMMOND PHOTO

The Wild Cascades

Journal of the North Cascades Conservation Council

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and Rick McGuire

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The Wild Cascades Editor

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THE NORTH CASCADES

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


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

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

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Founded in 1957
SEATTLE, WASHINGTON

The President's Report

Summer/Fall 2010

This summer as many of us were enjoying our wilderness areas and national parks, I hope we all took some time to reflect on how they came to be and who helped make it happen. As president of North Cascades Conservation Council, I often get caught up with efforts to convert roadless areas into park and wilderness and how difficult it sometimes becomes. Thinking back, I wonder how it must have been for those early pioneers who blazed the trail to create our first protected areas. Their skill and perseverance seem astonishing.

Who were they? Of course there was John Muir, clearly the most influential citizen activist in the last few hundred years. The persons (and my heroes) that made the most difference in the Northwest have to include Dave Brower, Polly Dyer, Patrick Goldsworthy, Harvey Manning, and Phil and Laura Zalesky. These folks, all board members of the NCCC, were instrumental in creating the new North Cascades National Park, the Glacier Peak Wilderness and several other important protected areas we all know and love.

It is always difficult to point out a few leaders and not mention others who were also instrumental in achieving so many of our successes. A few of these other important people must include Grant McConnell, a Stehekin stalwart, Joe and Margaret Miller — our alpine native plant specialists, Dave Fluharty, who led the fight to stop high Ross Dam, Brock Evans, and others.

While we should not be continually dwelling on the past, it is good to occasionally reflect on how these folks led the way and worked out many of the methods we are still using today to protect additional land for the public good.

Marc Bardsley

A special contribution to NCCC would help

NCCC volunteers and staff have been very engaged and productive in 2010. It is time for you to consider a special end-of-year contribution to NCCC. Have we met your expectations? Have we protected the North Cascades as you expected? Below are some of the highlights from 2010 that you can read about in this and recent editions of *The Wild Cascades*.

- The American Alps Legacy Project has made major strides in educating Washington residents on the benefits of completing the North Cascades National Park. Special reports on the economic and biodiversity benefits of park expansion have been published and circulated widely. The initiative has gotten the attention of our elected officials. Successful visits to Washington, DC and on-the-ground tours of the American Alps have provided the information needed for our elected officials to take action.
- NCCC has played a leadership role in promoting scientific management of our public lands and wildlife in the North Cascades. Our participation in the Ross Lake National Recreation Area Management Plan review has provided guidance for NRA management for the next decade. Comments on the Stehekin River Corridor Implementation Plan have supported a scientific approach to river management and helped thwart heavy-handed engineering fixes to flooding.
- NCCC has worked with other conservation groups to promote new wilderness and wild and scenic rivers in western Washington. We have insisted that the Washington State Wolf Conservation and Management Plan be based on population biology science and not crippling compromises with ranchers. We have led the charge in protecting Reiter State Forest from off-road vehicle damage and Blanchard State Forest from chainsaws. And, we have continued efforts to protect Lake Chelan from Holden Mine runoff.
- We have honored the contributions of one of NCCC's founding members, with a big 90th birthday party for Polly Dyer.

We urge you to support our conservation efforts. Without NCCC, the bad guys would already have prevailed on many of these issues. Without NCCC and partner organizations like the Mountaineers, there would be no effort to fulfill the conservation vision for the North Cascades by completing the North Cascades National Park.

We need your support more than ever in this tough fund-raising environment.

Visit the NCCC website (www.northcascades.org) to make a special contribution to NCCC. Use the membership/donation form in this edition of to mail in your contribution. NCCC is a non-profit, 501(c)3 organization. Your contributions will be tax deductible.

We also strongly encourage you to consider a bequest to NCCC in your will. Your bequest will help assure that NCCC is around in future decades to continue the fight against hydropower development, mining, logging, motorized recreation, and many other major threats to the North Cascades.

Saving the Cascades with Social Media

That title may sound a bit overly ambitious, and indeed it may be. But with a little effort, the new ways of communicating on the web may go a long way toward bringing new interest and involvement our way.

I launched a blog and a Facebook page for NCCC and our American Alps project recently. It's been easier than I anticipated, and quite rewarding to see the response. The hardest part sometimes is to "regulate" the flow of content, which rarely flows in a linear fashion. But perhaps that's part of the appeal of these new methods.

The blog is simply a series of short articles, often including images and links, about the issues we're involved in. From original trip reports to referrals to news stories, anyone can read the blog for free, no registration or login required, at:

<http://americanalps.blogspot.com>

The most recent story appears at the top. Scroll down for older stories, and there's a table of contents in the right column, along with a "search" box.

I'd also like to offer any NCCC member authorship — just email me for info: pfitech@seanet.com. The more authors the better, and your voice can be heard!

The most recent blog stories also now appear in the main NCCC website page, at www.northcascades.org — which makes this content visible to all NCCC site visitors.

Indications are that about 100 people a week visit our blog from all over the world, many reaching it from Google searches. Who knows who may discover and join NCCC by finding us this way.

Our Facebook page is a bit more complicated. It works like any other FB page, with its own list of posts, and all others

also on FB will see our posts added to their "news feed" by becoming a "fan" of ours. If you're on Facebook, type "American Alps" in the search box at the top, then when our page appears, click the "Like" button to become a fan. Once you're a fan, click the "Suggest to Friends" link and help our fan base grow. These fans could make the difference when it comes time to start writing letters to elected officials. We have about 120 fans now after just a few months of operation.

So next time you're surfing the web, take a look at our growing social media presence. And for advanced users who are using an aggregator to read blogs, you can subscribe to our RSS feed from the blog. Many mobile devices also let you subscribe to RSS feeds, so you can take the latest NCCC info with you.

Pass it along!

—Philip Fenner

Forest Service proposes Illabot road decommissioning

In an unexpected and welcome move, the Mount Baker district of the Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest (MBS) has released a proposal to decommission most of the Illabot Creek road. Illabot Creek flows into the Skagit from the southeast, a few miles east of the Skagit-Sauk confluence, and is an important salmon spawning stream in its lower reaches. A bill to designate the upper parts of it as Wild & Scenic recently passed the U.S. House.

The Illabot Creek road is among the most egregious examples on the Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest of a pointless road built deep into otherwise wild country during the overbudgeted

1960s, and on a national forest with thousands of miles of pointless roads, that is saying a lot. The road penetrates deeply into an otherwise roadless extent of country off the northwest corner of the Glacier Peak Wilderness, and like countless others it served only to allow cutting of poor quality high-elevation silver fir forest sold at a great loss to taxpayers. The Illabot valley might have been added to the wilderness were it not for this road.

It is encouraging to see the Forest Service proposing such a significant amount of decommissioning as they are here. If they go ahead with their proposed action, 14.5 miles of the upper Illabot road will be de-

commissioned. Sedimentation into Illabot Creek will be greatly reduced, and taxpayer dollars will no longer go to maintain a pointless road traversing very difficult and unstable terrain. While a number of short spur roads have been decommissioned on the MBS, decommissioning of the Illabot road would be a rare instance of the Forest Service taking out a “mainstem” road. NCCC supports and applauds the Mount Baker district of the MBS for its willingness to propose such a sensible project.

—Rick McGuire

VIEWPOINT: Into the wilds with iceaxe, cellphone and GPS

John S. Edwards

Is technology making fools of us? Have cell phones and GPS changed our relationship to wild country? Judging by the examples of stupidity reported by Leslie Kaufman recently in the *New York Times*, technology is adding new dimensions to the forms of idiocy manifested in the national parks. Petting bears and teasing bison are familiar examples of stupidity in the parks; they are egregious but usually only menace the perpetrator. Misuse of radio communications is more reprehensible to the extent that it can endanger rangers and search and rescue crews. Calls to rangers from mountaintops to request refreshments or guides, a lost hiker calling in for hot chocolate are the least of the cases. Hikers in the Grand Canyon called in rescue helicopters by pressing the emergency button on their satellite location device simply because their water tasted salty. Calls from benighted hikers asked for an escort to safety where an overnight bivouac would have been a salutary lesson in judgment.

Park visitors have been known to set out to hike with their GPS but without map or compass, let alone the other essentials. Some GPS devices can send an emergency signal but lack two-way communication and this can create pseudo-emergencies. For example, hikers in Grand Canyon National Park sent an emergency signal that led to a helicopter search. The responding crew located the hikers but the party declined to board the helicopter, saying that they used the emergency call because they were simply short of water.

These are extreme examples of the misuse of technology that would be laughable if they were not expensive and dangerous for rescue crews. But they do raise a deeper question: might the judgment of competent and experienced backcountry travellers be affected by the knowledge that rescue is so easily summoned? At least part of the challenge of travel in wilderness is the exercise of skills and experience to navigate, to assess topography and snow conditions, to be aware of weather

portents; in short to be self-reliant. Of course things can go seriously wrong — a fall, a sprain, a broken limb can happen to the best of backcountry travellers. Perhaps that is an argument for adding radio to the Ten Essentials. But one wonders whether it is possible that marginal decision could be affected by the knowledge that rescue is so easily summoned.

Should search and rescue crews put their lives in danger simply because they can be so easily called out? Perhaps it is time to adopt the European system where rescue service is based on insurance. No policy, no rescue.

It is intriguing to ponder what the heroic explorers of pre-radio days, Amundsen, Nansen, Scott, or Lewis and Clark, for example, would make of modern communication and rescue. GPS and satellite phones may save lives but perhaps, by comparison, they also serve to trivialize modern ventures into the unknown.

American Alps Biodiversity Report Released

By Jim Davis



Bobcat —JIM DAVIS PHOTO

The North Cascades Conservation Council has released a report on biodiversity conservation in the American Alps. The report highlights why the American Alps proposal to expand the North Cascades National Park is important for biodiversity conservation. You can access the report on the American Alps website at www.americanalps.org.

The American Alps Legacy Proposal will convert to national park more than 300,000 acres of national forest and national recreation area lands. Conversion to national park will provide congressionally mandated permanent protection for these lands. The National Park Service (NPS) will focus management efforts on biodiversity conservation and recreation, as opposed to the broader multiple-use mandates for national forest and national recreation area lands.

The American Alps Biodiversity Report examines important habitats in the American Alps area that are in need of protection. It focuses on multiple at-risk species and explains how they will be benefited by Park expansion. The report also identifies

the major threats to biodiversity in the American Alps and lays out clearly why NPS is the better land management agency for long-term biodiversity conservation.

NPS has a strong mandate for biodiversity conservation in national parks. NPS policy states, "The Park Service will successfully maintain native plants and animals by preserving and restoring the natural abundances, diversities, dynamics, distributions, habitats, and behaviors of native plant and animal populations and the communities and ecosystems in which they occur; restoring native plant and animal populations in parks when they have been extirpated by past human-caused actions; and minimizing human impacts on native plants, animals, populations, communities, and ecosystems, and the processes that sustain them" (National Park Service Management Policies, 2006. Natural Resource Section 4.4.1).

Conversion of American Alps lands to national park will significantly increase the size of core protected areas for at risk species in the North Cascades. Mountain goats will receive increased protection from hunting. An increase in the size of

the park will be particularly important for colonizing wolf packs that are struggling to survive. Grizzly bears will be better protected from accidental shooting and other human caused mortality. Wolverines will be able to roam more freely across contiguous and unfragmented blocks of habitat.

Several human activities that severely impact biodiversity will be limited or banned under NPS management. National park status will protect low elevation forests from a return to logging and forest road building, providing a boost to the recovery of spotted owl, marbled murrelet, salmon, and bull trout populations. Including pristine rivers and streams in the park will restrict small hydropower development, limit construction of water storage dams, and discourage new mining claims. NPS will also have substantially greater policy authority and enforcement capacity to protect sensitive habitats from off-road vehicle damage.

The American Alps Legacy Proposal is focused on the long-term integrity of the North Cascades ecosystem. It emphasizes the paramount importance of wildlife and fish biodiversity in the North Cascades. It bequeaths a legacy to future generations that will treasure this truly magnificent wild area in Washington's North Cascades. Now is the time to take action to preserve and restore wildlife and fish biodiversity in the North Cascades.

Researching Biodiversity and Ecosystem Dynamics in Our American Alps

Phil Zalesky

Recently when going through my *Audubon* magazine for July-August 2010, I came across an article, "The Mother Lode," that piqued my interest. It's about exploring biodiversity in Great Smoky National Park. My thoughts then roamed to see if a parallel plan could be used within our American Alps project.

Great Smoky National Park

The article featured a search for biodiversity in Great Smoky National Park during the past decade. About a thousand professional and amateur scientists were involved. I write my thoughts on this not as a biologist, nor an entomologist, taxonomist, or botanist. I'm not even an "ologist," but I am fascinated and curious about science. So I will attempt to tell you about their research and ask how American Alps could have a comparable study.

They established an All Taxa Biological Inventory. National Park scientists alone could not have undertaken such a large-scale effort. Discover Life, a nonprofit organization, paid to make it happen. At this point in their research they have discovered 907 species previously unknown to science as well as 600 rare species not previously known from the area.

Among the new finds were freshwater crayfish, arachnids both terrestrial and aquatic, such as spiders and water mites, many beetles, 74 species of moths and butterflies, 23 new species of bees, and 78 algal species. Fungus-like slime molds occur in the Smokies with three-fourths of the known genera worldwide occurring here. They "can be found in moist settings, where they eat bacteria that engineer decay, helping nutrients cycle through the ecosystem."

Great Smoky National Park has a topography that rises from 870 to 6,643 feet. Some areas were heavily logged and farmed, yet even in these damaged areas the biodiversity rebounded. "So why have so many species new to science and the park been discovered in a landscape that white settlers moved into in the 18th century and that was heavily logged deep into the 20th century? The species are both longtime residents that have symbiotic rolls as well as relative newcomers that have disrupted the ecosystem."

One facet of the present day diversity relates back to the great glaciation of the last Ice Age that did not quite reach the Great Smoky Mountains. Species that were driven south by the advancing ice found refugia in the Great Smoky Mountains. There they have stayed in reproductive isolation and have evolved over time.

The American Alps in North Cascade National Park

Would it be possible for the North Cascades National Park to replicate the Great Smoky program? Obviously the National Park Service has not the staff to undertake this. It too would require a foundation to finance it and assemble such a jigsaw puzzle as the All Taxa Biological Inventory. Twelve other of the national parks have been undertaking such species inventories, so why not North Cascades National Park?

We have an ideal topography for it. Much of what I write here was stimulated by Arthur Kruckeberg's book *Geology and Plant Life*. The Cascade Range of Washington increases in ruggedness going north from the Columbia River. The closer we get to the Canadian border with its geological jumble of unusual ruggedness, the more likely would be found rare and local plants. It could be a place of reproductive isolation.

The American Alps Legacy Project may possibly be an ideal area for botanists searching for new species of rare but also previously unidentified plants. Few new plants would be found in this rugged and jagged terrain of the Golden Horn area. The Continental Glacier 100,000 years ago forced the disappearance of most resident species, except for areas such as the Golden Horn that were ice-free and formed refugia, where the ancient plants survived.

Insects, spiders and other invertebrates would have been subjected to the climatic events of the last glaciation and a close examination of the area could well reveal refugial species. What seemed to make the Great Smokys so productive biologically was that the ice shield did not reach the region and seemed to force ancient biological species to move in front of the ice sheet with a resting place at the end in these mountains. The North Cascades, in

contrast, felt the full impact of the advancing ice, so we would not expect to find great diversity. But we don't know until we look.

As we understand the river corridors today, dead carcasses of salmon and other fish provide the nutrients of the biological energy to the ecosystem. As many as 20 to 25 mammals feed from these carcasses including bears, river otters, racoons, and coyotes. These are the heavier mammals that drag the carcasses into the riparian areas. Smaller animals such as numerous birds, mink, skunk, deer mice and shrews then feed from the carcasses left in the riparian areas. Those not eaten decay, providing nutrients for plants and insects. From there many microbial species then feed on the carcasses, destroying the find. All living things, birds, beetles worms, algae are all part of this functioning ecosystem.

Of all the species described from the Great Smokys, the most fascinating for me were the water mites. Mites are species that we hardly notice but they play decisive roles in the river system; they are the carnivores that can restrain the population of insects. This one example shows the value of developing an All Taxa Inventory in building an appreciation of ecosystem dynamics. And the North Cascades is surely a good place to embark on such a project.

More news from Reiter Forest

by Karl Forsgaard



Wild Sky peaks Gunn, Merchant, and Baring from upper end of Mainline road, Reiter Forest.

—KARL FORSGAARD

We previously reported on the historic closure of Reiter Forest to motorized use (see *The Wild Cascades*, Winter 2009-2010). It was expected that Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) would reopen Reiter to motorized use by the summer of 2010, but that did not happen, and the reasons were significant. The temporary closure is still in effect, almost a year later.

Throughout the winter of 2009-2010, the off-road vehicle (ORV) community demanded that DNR reopen Reiter as soon as possible. To speed up the reopening, the ORV community and groups such as Reiter Trail Watch donated volunteer labor on DNR-led work parties to restore sites

damaged by past ORV recreation. They attended many DNR meetings and field trips to help DNR design a new system of ORV routes in the newly designated ORV area (1,100 acres of the 10,000-acre forest).

It will take DNR a lot of time, including design work, funding and environmental review, to designate and construct new ORV routes with appropriate protections, such as bridges over streams.

In early June 2010, DNR proposed to reopen the ORV area to motorized use on June 20, with the motorized use initially limited to the mainline logging road (a wide gravel road used by logging trucks), also known as the Deer Flats road, which leads to a spectacular viewpoint overlooking the Wild Sky peaks and the upper Skykomish Valley. However, the ORV commu-

nity then urged DNR to not reopen Reiter, reversing their prior demands to reopen it as soon as possible.

The reason for this reversal is that the ORV community saw the risk that uncooperative ORV riders would refuse to stay on the roads, trespass onto the old user-created ORV routes (which are being decommissioned), and create new damage in the forest before the new ORV routes are built. In a letter to the media and in a DNR blog and press release, representatives of the Northwest Motorcycle Association, Washington Off Highway Vehicle Alliance, PNW4WD and Wheelers Of Washington told DNR that “opening just the [mainline] forest roads would encourage and facilitate illegal use of the area

Continued on page 9

Reiter Forest

Continued from page 8

and compromise the entire project. We would like DNR to focus their resources on completing the restoration work and getting the trail systems developed before reopening the area.”

This shows that even in a high-priority area like Reiter, and with a worthy destination for the proposed reopening, the ORV community recognized that its own “self-policing” volunteers would not be able to fully patrol the Reiter mainline road if it reopened. They also recognized that the numerous “bad apples” in their community could do enough new damage to “compromise the entire project.”

This underscores the importance of securing adequate dedicated enforcement resources before opening up any area to motorized recreation.

The entire Reiter forest was temporarily closed to motorized use in November 2009 because ORVs had done so much extreme damage to the trees and the soil and the streams. The 4x4 “tube buggies” going cross-country through the forest, squeezing between trees and stripping the bark off hundreds of trees, were killing them. Sediment delivery into streams threatened the salmon and steelhead runs downstream. DNR observed “tube buggies” coming to Reiter from Oregon – because

they were not allowed to behave like this in Oregon.

DNR is now preparing request legislation for the 2011 session of the state legislature, including proposals for increased enforcement resources. Enforcement and restoration are important because unmanaged motorized recreation can damage trees, soils and water quality, causing Clean Water Act violations and jeopardizing the state’s Habitat Conservation Plan for these lands. Damage to the trees also damages the revenue stream for our schools and other trust beneficiaries of the state trust lands.

DNR’s duty to protect these resources is not optional, it is mandatory. We need to keep our water clean and protect wildlife habitat, and we need to restore areas that have been damaged by motorized recreation.

The Reiter story is relevant on federal lands as well. In its travel management scoping, the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest proposed to introduce non-street-legal ORV use to 350 miles of “mixed use” roads. At Reiter, the ORV community admitted that ORV riders would likely not stay on the designated “mixed-use” road at Reiter and would trespass onto non-designated trails and cross-country routes.

This is relevant to proposals for introducing non-street-legal ORV use to 350 miles of “mixed use” roads on national forest lands.

In August 2010, the *Everett Herald* reported that Snohomish County has dropped a plan to allow ORVs on paved county roads near Reiter, including Reiter Road between Gold Bar and Index. “The idea was supposed to boost tourism and economic development” by allowing ORVs “better access” to Reiter forest. Concerns from neighbors and law enforcement caused the County Council to reconsider, and the proposed county ordinance was withdrawn. “The biggest complaint was that if you opened up the roads to ORV (off-road-vehicle) traffic, we don’t have the law enforcement capacity out here to make sure it’s obeyed,” Gold Bar Mayor Joe Beavers said. Index Mayor Bruce Albert also warned it would compromise public safety on a narrow road with blind corners. “The idea isn’t dead, just dormant,” said Ted Jackson, who lives in the area and has been involved in trail issues. After the public meeting, Jackson said several people in the area told him they didn’t think it was such a bad idea. It’s something they’re likely to revisit, he said, once the state moves the project further along.



*Phelps Basin, Glacier Peak Wilderness.—
PHILIP FENNER PHOTO*

Finney AMA Plan Disappoints

Rick McGuire



The Mount Baker Snoqualmie National Forest (MBS) has released a management plan calling for “restoration” logging in the Finney Adaptive Management Area.

The Finney AMA consists of about 100,000 acres in the northern end of the MBS, an “island” of public national forest land south of the lower Skagit, north of the North Fork Stillaguamish and west of the lower Sauk.

The Finney block, as it is usually called, is a little known, seldom visited, mostly forgotten corner of the MBS. Probably its most visible landmark is the south face of Mount Higgins, rising in a moderately dramatic sweep of mature forest north of the North Fork Stillaguamish River. Featuring a rather un-Cascadian looking series

of horizontal strata at its top, Higgins is prominent from Highway 530 west of Darrington, and visible from around Arlington south to Everett and beyond to those who know where to look. Other views of the Finney block tend toward the forgettable. As seen from the Skagit it’s little more than nondescript, heavily logged hills, albeit with a few small pockets of old growth still surviving here and there, notably in the steep valleys in and around the Presentin Creek area.

The Finney was hit harder by the 1950-1990 orgy of subsidized national forest logging than just about any other part of the MBS. Other than a few thousand acres at lower elevations on its edges, very little of the Finney is prime timberland. Most of it can best be described as high-elevation leftovers from the timber industry’s priva-

Roads climb steep slopes almost to the sky on private land south of the lower Skagit River, with remnant Finney Block old growth on ridgetops to right.

—TOM HAMMOND PHOTO

tizations of the desirable lowlands in the Skagit-Stillaguamish area over a century ago. These high-elevation forests weren’t worth bothering with, and thus became part of the then-Mt. Baker National Forest.

Poor quality timber didn’t stop roads from being pushed into virtually every corner of the Finney in the last half of the twentieth century. This was taxpayer subsidized logging at its worst. Congress appropriated hundreds of millions of dollars annually in those years to build roads and pay people to layout timber sales, which

in the case of the Finney seldom recouped any of the money that went into them. Other costs such as damage to streams and fisheries were never given a thought.

Several factors combined to make the Finney about the worst hammered landscape to be found on the MBS. It was, and still is, out of sight and out of mind, a place with few visitors or defenders. As awareness of the value of old forests grew during the 1980s it became more and more difficult for the Forest Service to continue business as usual by punching new roads into roadless areas. The agency faced strong opposition and much bad publicity when it tried to cut places with defenders. Lowering the hugely unsustainable cut level was of course unthinkable, so more and more logging was concentrated in places like the Finney where few would see it. The result was the severely overcut Finney block we see today.

Sixty percent of the Finney is, or was, high-elevation silver fir forest. Twenty four percent of it is even higher mountain hemlock forest. Pacific silver fir produces low quality “white wood,” lacking strength and decay resistance, but the trees are splendidly adapted for growing where few others can, and for holding mountains together in areas subject to severe rain on snow events. One of the few interesting highlights to be found in the Finney AMA plan comes from MBS Forest Ecologist Jan Henderson, who has spent decades studying the forests of the Cascades and Olympics. He describes the Finney AMA as:

“... an environment that is colder and wetter than virtually all forest lands in the contiguous USA. Forests developed under conditions where fire was a rare occurrence. When fire occurred, it usually happened only around the warmer or drier edges or many hundreds of years ago. The Finney AMA is atypical of the remainder of the NW Forest Plan area due to very infrequent fire and high precipitation. This results in stands reaching ages much older than in NWFP areas further south.”

About 40 per cent of the forest in the Finney has been cut since WWII. Since the cutting was scattered all across the landscape, leaving very few intact blocks of forest, it looks worse than the numbers might imply. Much of the cutting was concentrated in the lower elevation areas where the timber was more valuable, but 37 per cent of the Pacific silver fir zone forest was cut, along with an astonishing 4600 acres (14 per cent) of the uppermost mountain hemlock zone. The combination of cheap oil and an overstaffed, overfunded bureaucracy resulted in the chopping

up of a high altitude landscape that would never have been cut in a more economically rational world. Much of the inferior wood was barely worth cutting even when practically given away.

Hundreds of miles of roads were built at public expense to haul out the wood cut during those decades. Despite the money spent on them, these roads were not built to last, and their subsequent decay and collapse has severely damaged downstream fish habitat. Lower Finney Creek was once one of the most productive salmon streams in the lower Skagit watershed. Lower Deer Creek, a tributary of the North Fork Stillaguamish, was once legendary for its steelhead, celebrated by the famous fishing writer Zane Gray. Both streams have been seriously degraded by upstream logging in the Finney, with Deer Creek in particular now just a shadow of its former self. The Forest Service has managed to decommission many of these roads over the past two decades, reducing but not eliminating the damage they do. Much road mileage remains and continues to decay, almost none of it serving any purpose.

The recently released Finney AMA plan starts out well enough by declaring the restoration of late successional forest as its primary goal. But it's all downhill from there, with selective logging being the way this is supposed to happen. The document does not describe any rationale for this, it simply being accepted Forest Service dogma that logging is the solution to every problem — no explanations required. For those unfamiliar with Forest Service orthodoxy, the thinking behind this runs something along the lines of there being too many trees in previously logged areas. Taking some of them out is supposed to reduce the competition and “release” those left behind, making them grow faster and better than if left alone. Underpinning all this is an unshakable belief that foresters can always grow forests faster and better than unassisted nature. Any and all evidence to the contrary is studiously ignored.

And there is now abundant evidence after more than two decades of this selective logging that it does nothing to “restore” forests, but does great harm. Selective logging, obviously, means that some trees are left behind. Such logging can't be done with towers and cables, but must be ground based, meaning lots of heavy machinery driving all around, dragging logs, rutting and compacting soils. Removing some of the trees unravels stands where the trees have grown up mutually protecting each other, making those remaining

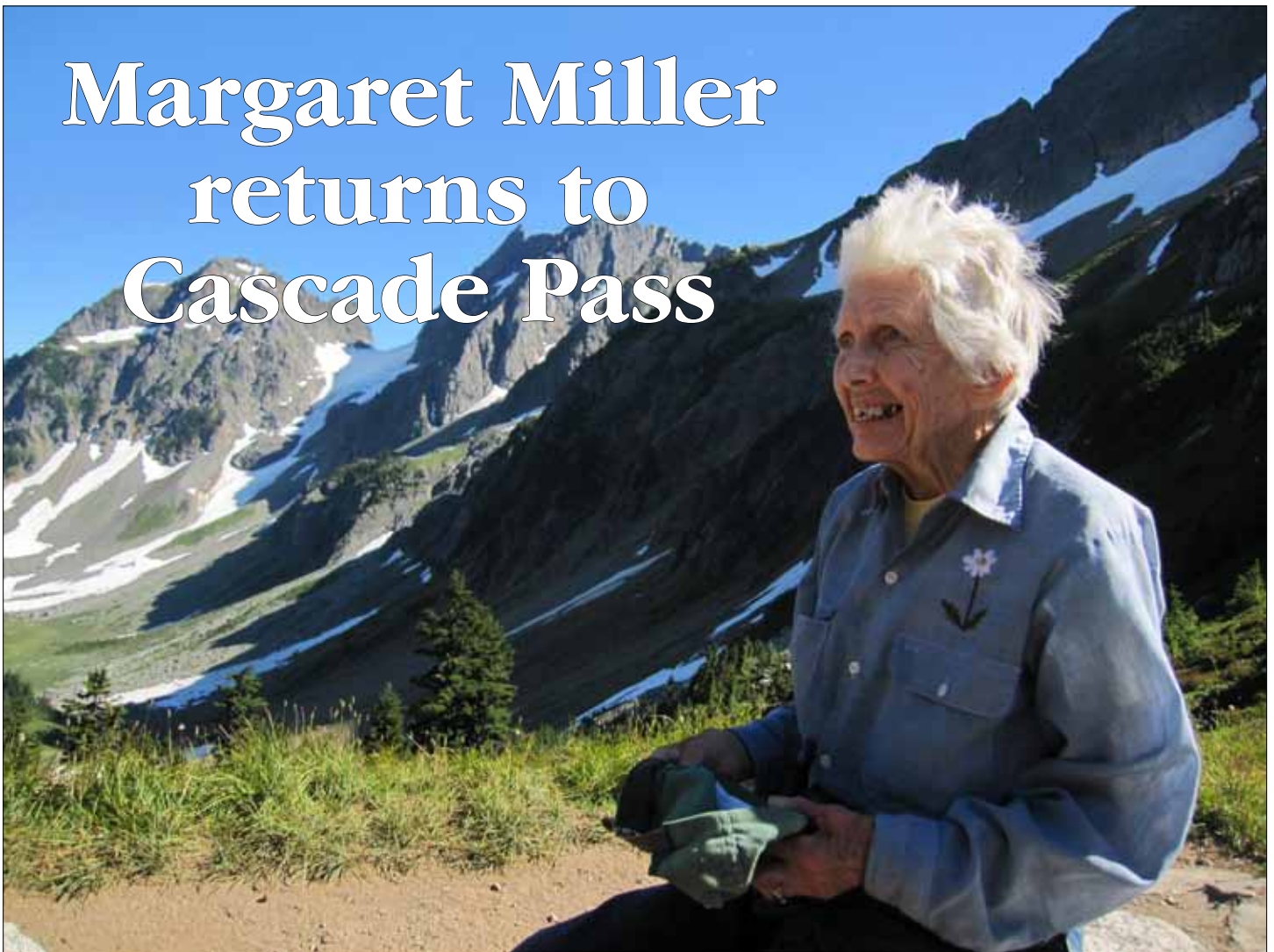
vulnerable to windthrow after the sudden removal of their neighbors.

Selective logging is entirely unlike anything that occurs in nature — at least clearcutting simulates the effect of fire in some ways. Quite often the partial opening of forest canopies by selective logging lets in insufficient light to allow regeneration of pioneer species such as Douglas fir, but enough increased light to stimulate the growth of hemlock thickets. These thickets can number in the hundreds of thousands of small trees per acre, forming an amazingly dense understory that utterly defeats the goal of increased growth for the leave trees by sucking up most of the available water and nutrients. They also form an impenetrable thicket offering absolutely nothing but an obstacle for wildlife. The Forest Service takes no interest in selectively logged areas once a timber sale is finished, and these “hemlock barrens” now blight an increasingly large part of the MBS.

Selective logging, or “thinning,” leaves a forest that looks, and is, entirely unnatural. It doesn't work, and in many cases is an unmitigated disaster. But logging is in the Forest Service's DNA. Simply leaving things alone is unthinkable. The Finney AMA plan has plenty of verbiage about research and experiments, but none of it really amounts to anything more than justification for more logging, dressed up with talk of “restoration.” If past experience is any guide, selective logging will be done not in the “dense, dark plantations” of younger trees. It will happen instead in areas of older, mature, naturally regenerated second growth forest where the trees are larger and more valuable and sales might have better chances of attracting buyers. But it is an inherently difficult, uneconomic way to log, almost never done on private lands.

It's disappointing to see the Forest Service put out a plan that proposes yet more logging to solve the problems from previous logging. Even as the agency slowly dwindles away, it still looks upon logging as its lifeblood. But there are some rays of hope. Trees grow quickly in the Cascades, and the Finney looks better now than it did two decades ago. The Finney AMA plan, if implemented, would reverse that, but the Forest Service has had great difficulty selling its selective logging sales even when housing construction was booming. It may now be impossible to sell them, particularly sales of silver fir, even at giveaway prices. The collapse of the housing market and its demand for wood may yet be the salvation of the Finney, and many other places as well.

Margaret Miller returns to Cascade Pass



NORTH CASCADES — Through 33 switchbacks, thousands of biting flies, and crowds of hikers, Margaret Miller managed to hike the Cascade Pass trail's 3.7 miles of rocky, steep terrain in about six hours. At the age of 88, she is legally blind.

Miller returned to the national park for the first time in almost two decades on Saturday, August 14, for the beginning of the National Park Service's annual revegetation effort. Miller and her late husband Joe were solely responsible for initiating the re-vegetation process in the Cascade Pass area, and were one of five couples who fought to make the North Cascades National Park a reality.

"Margaret is one of the most important people to have hiked here over the last century and said 'By god, this is going to be a national park,'" Tom Hammond, a member of the North Cascade Conservation Council (NCCC) said. "[Joe and Margaret] initiated the concept, and were the first to scientifically assess the flora of the North Cascades."

According to the National Park Service, 6,000 to 8,000 native plants are transplanted to the pass each fall, with over 60,000 plants being transplanted since 1981. The plants are grown at the ranger station in Marblemount, Wash., in a greenhouse that bears the Millers name. Volunteers and national park rangers then collect the shrubberies and carry them to the pass.

"We have graduated hundreds of young people into caring for this specific area

through our programs," Michael Bondi, the volunteer coordinator for the North Cascades National Park Service Complex said. "I'm deeply honored to have Margaret here to see what we're doing."

Residents of Bellevue since 1958, the Miller's began their re-vegetation efforts by growing plants under a lean-to in their backyard. Their restoration of the pass began a year after the park was founded in 1968.

"We had all kinds of people saying we couldn't do it... bringing trees nurtured at sea level to mountain elevations for reforestation," Miller said laughing. "We've settled that."

According to the book *Wilderness Alps* by Harvey Manning, Seattle City Light began a project in 1968 to raise the level of Ross Lake in the North Cascades by



Dual-pole system is used as the Buchanans bike with Margaret to Cascade Pass.

125 ft. through construction on the lake's existing dam.

The national park turned to the Millers for help, and the couple spent from 1968 to 1971 documenting the ecosystems and cedar groves of the lake's tributary systems. They studied the Big Beaver, Little Beaver, Baker, Chillicack, and Silver Creek valleys while simultaneously operating the revegetation project on Cascade Pass. Their analysis discovered 240 plants native to the area, 21 of which were not known to have existed in the park complex.

"The people who were saying [the lake tributaries] were like all the places in the lowlands seemed to have no idea what was in the area," Miller said. "We came away thinking it was pretty unique...No place in the North Cascades would hold a candle to [the flora] that was there."

The study, titled "The Preliminary Ecological Survey of Big Beaver Valley, North Cascades National Park Complex," was contrary to the work of Prof. Grant Sharpe of the University of Washington College of Forest Resources. Sharpe found the ecosystems to have little unique importance, and advocated the further damming of Ross Lake as a power resource despite the destruction of tributary valleys.

"We had so many projects that our heads were swimming," Miller said. "We

were glad to do what we could do and we hoped that our data would help, which apparently it did."

The Millers testified before the Seattle City Council, Washington State Ecological Commission, the Federal Power Commission and the International Joint Commission in order to advocate against the expansion of the dam. Despite their study, the Federal Energy Regulatory commission approved the project in 1977 and the U.S. Court of Appeals upheld the project license in 1980 after further legal resistance.

"The British Columbian government stepped up and helped us after we blew the whistle on the whole thing", Miller said. "[Joe and I] went up there and did a little rabble rousing because the water was going to be backed up into Canada."

British Columbia worked to block construction in 1983 and a document was signed the same year between the United States and Canada concluding the project. Seattle City Light agreed to buy energy from Canada at a cheaper rate than they would

be able to produce it after the dam expansion.

"It took them 10 years, but they got their stuff together," Miller said.

Years later, Miller again made her way to Cascade Pass, where event staff and on-lookers met her with applause and cheers. Walking cautiously between two balancing bars, Miller inched towards the scenic overlook with the help of volunteers.

Lidija Kamansky, a member of a backpacking group moving through the pass, was moved to tears.

"It's a wonderful story and the commitment is extraordinary," Kamansky said. "It's absolutely inspirational to be in her presence, and to see not only the work she has put in today, but that her labors have

Continued on page 14



Margaret scatters Joe's ashes over a patch of heather at Cascade Pass.

—PHOTOS BY BASIL TSIMOYANIS

Joe Miller — American Hero

Tom Hammond

Margaret Miller took her husband Joe's remains to Cascade Pass on August 14, 2010.

It is difficult for me to put into words how honored and humbled I am to have been present for Joe's military funeral, and a couple years later, his final return to Cascade Pass. I thank the Buchanan family — Kitty, who is Margaret and Joe's goddaughter, together with her husband Larry and two sons, care for Margaret, now 88.

I wrote the following shortly after returning from Tahoma National Cemetery in March, 2008 where part of Joe's remains were interred but Margaret had in mind one final mission for Joe — to lay him to rest at Cascade Pass...

March 28, 2008

I went to Tahoma National Cemetery today to pay respects to a true American hero: Joseph W. Miller. Joe served in the 1st Battalion of the 20th Engineering Combat Regiment that first landed at Casablanca and directly engaged Rommel at Kasserine Pass in North Africa. Many of Joe's mates died clearing mines and building the road that enabled the US and Brits to achieve victory there. Then the 20th landed on Yellow Beach closely east of Licata on Sicily. Joe helped Patton reach Messina before Montgomery. Then it was on to Omaha Beach, where a landing craft directly in front of Joe's was hit and he saw his comrades disintegrate in front of

him. Joe's unit cut through tank traps and mines, and secured one of the key roads that allowed so many Brits, Canadians and US to escape the slaughter of those beachheads. Joe and his fellow soldiers literally built the podium on which the generals stood to celebrate the liberation of Paris. Joe secured the road at Bastogne in the Battle of the Bulge. Joe's was the first unit to enter Leipzig, and later shook hands with Russians as the forces linked in Czechoslovakia.

But Joe would be quick to tell you the greatest victory of his life was helping create North Cascades National Park, and saving Big Beaver Valley from dams and chainsaws. You see, the reason I was there to pay respects to Joseph W. Miller is that above all he believed preserving our glorious wildlands was his primary mission. Joe and Margaret were on the board of the North Cascades Conservation Council. They worked for years as volunteers with the national park to study the flora and the damage it had sustained through unwise use. They stood before Congress to testify in support of the North Cascades, and were key in securing its protected status as a wilderness and national park.

They spent countless hours replanting damaged meadows, notably at Cascade Pass, and fighting extractive industries.

Fittingly, on this March 28th, it was snowing heavily; turning those acres of graves a pristine white. It couldn't snow hard enough to conceal the tears running down my cheeks.

A true American hero, we all owe a debt to this giant of a man.

This was read at Joe's service, it is reminiscent of a Native American burial rite:

*Do not stand at my grave and weep.
I am not here. I do not sleep.
I am the thousand winds that blow;
I am the diamond glints on snow.
I am the sunlight on ripened grain;
I am the gentle Autumn rain.
When you awake in the morning's bush,
I am the swift uplifting rush
Of quiet birds in circled flight.
I am the soft star that shines at night.
Do not stand at my grave and cry;
I am not here...I did not die.*

—Mary Elizabeth Frye

August 14, 2010

Margaret Miller was intent, even adamant that she would carry Joe home — to lay him to rest at Cascade Pass. The only problem: even with the long, high road in to the trailhead, the path to Cascade Pass is about four steep, rocky miles. So the Buchanans rigged up a dual-pole system, and together with head NPS ranger Kelly Bush, NCCC board members, who were there for the American Alps Project, also helped Margaret. The NCCC members carried dozens of native plants to Cascade Pass as part of a revegetation program initiated by the Millers decades ago. The plants came from the National Park Service greenhouse in Marblemount named in honor of Margaret and Joe.

Polly Dyer was on hand too — so we had two pioneers of conservation in the United States: a 90-year-old and an 88-year-old ready to tackle Cascade Pass — to visit the national park they created.

Margaret scattered Joe's ashes across the beautiful plants that grow below the high peaks and glaciers of the North Cascades.

Margaret Miller

Continued from page 13

come to fruition. She is the reason I am able to come and enjoy a place like this."

Once at the top, Miller spread her husband's ashes over a patch of heather, spending half an hour enjoying the area at which she spent so many hours in her past. Her husband was remembered as a veteran of the European theater during World War II, fighting in the first wave of D-Day's Omaha Beach assault and the Battle of the Bulge.

—Ross B. Buchanan

Check out northcascades.org

Click on *The Wild Cascades*.

Scroll down to link...

- The Kaopectate Kid*, link *TWC* December-January 1969-70.
- The fight to save the Big Beaver valley from flooding.

*aka Joe Miller

Suggested Revegetation Practices

by MARGARET M. MILLER and JOSEPH W. MILLER

Bellevue, Washington

PREPARED FOR THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE JUNE, 1977

Introduction

In the past ten years more and more of us have become increasingly aware of the impact of people on the backcountry of our wilderness areas and parks. This effect is certainly evident in the North Cascades, especially in the choice but scarce alpine and subalpine meadows. In 1970 we were asked to begin a revegetation project on Cascade Pass in the North Cascades National park. In the past this area had been heavily visited and used for camping by both backpackers and horse parties. Its beaten down meadows full of impacted trails, barren campsites, eroded gullies and assorted horrors stimulated us to study and conduct trials of revegetation methods.

Our backgrounds include years of gardening, degrees in biology and a long-time love of and experience in the mountains and wild areas of the West. Recently we have participated in seminars on wilderness management with the U.S. Forest Service and National Park Service. On numerous occasions we have had discussions with backcountry rangers, Youth Conservation Corps groups, Student Conservation Association groups and other volunteers on the techniques of replanting worn out campgrounds, old shelter sites and subalpine meadows.

It is hoped that this paper will help more of you than we will be able to meet personally to be successful in revegetating our beautiful mountain areas. We hope you will try some of our methods and will let us hear, in turn, your suggestions. All of us working together can help heal the scars of man's unthinking overuse of the mountains and backcountry. Thank you for your efforts.

If your aim is to try to restore the area to its original condition or merely to plant



Margaret and Joe Miller at Cascade Pass, from (December-January) 1969-1970, The Wild Cascades.

material that will cover the ground and prevent further degradation, then first you should spend some time really looking at the neighboring plant communities.

If it is a lowland forested area, what are the dominant trees? What shrubs are in the understory? What herbs are found with these woody plants? In order to understand the relationship of these various plants with each other, you should examine the microclimates and microhabitats.

Notice what plants seem to pioneer on disturbed soil, where a tree has blown over, in an avalanche track or recent rock slide, or what plants creep out onto the trail. Find damp areas and compare the

plants that live there with those on dry sites. Where the light is brightest, notice what vegetation occurs and how it differs from that found in dense shade. Pay attention to down logs and old stumps and what grows on them. Notice where seedlings and young plants are growing.

In a subalpine or alpine area notice the wind patterns. Often this is obvious from the branching habits on woody vegetation. Look for the plants that can withstand strong wind and those that shelter from the wind. Find the wet spots in the meadows and observe the plants that seem to prefer to grow near snow fields and snow melt water courses. Some plants have definite aspect preferences (north, south, east, west), especially around large rocks. Notice plants that appear to like to grow out on a boulder or crowd around its bottom or grow on rock screes.

You need not be a graduate taxonomist to observe carefully how plants live

together in communities or note their preferred habitats. You can call them by their common names if Latin names bother you, or even name them yourself — Plant A, Plant B etc. — as long as you identify the same plant consistently. See the list of suggested readings for helpful books on the identification of plants and how they live together.

All of this is to get you to see what plant habitat preferences you can find. . . .

Editor's Note: To read the complete article, go to www.northcascades.org, link to *The Wild Cascades*. Go to Articles and Research, click on Suggested Revegetation Practices by Margaret and Joseph Miller, 1977 — The classic report of NCCC's masters of meadow rehabilitation, focusing on Cascade Pass.



Chuck Sisco and Harry Hosey: Ancient Douglas fir near campsite, Bumping Flats, flood zone. —BROCK EVANS PHOTO*



Brock Evans and Chuck Sisco: same tree, flood zone, Bumping Flats, near campsite—HARRY HOSEY PHOTO



Bumping Lake trail, flood zone. Harry Hosey and Chuck Sisco. —BROCK EVANS PHOTO



Typical old growth forest, Bumping flats trail, flood zone. Harry and Chuck again. —BROCK EVANS PHOTO

**Chuck Sisco and Harry Hosey are personal friends. Chuck was then an employee of the National Audobon Society at its office in Olympia. Harry was from Redmond, a land developer who loved the wilderness. I haven't seen either for a long time.*

Bumping Lake ancient forest — One of a Kind

Tucked away in the Central Cascades just east of Mount Rainier National Park, there is a precious gem of a place: a magnificent remnant of the vast stands of ancient forest which used to carpet the whole region. Nearly 3,000 acres, it is almost all old growth forest — and this is no “ordinary” forest: a great many of its individual trees are huge, some enormous (8-10' diameter) by today's standards.

This spectacular remnant of what once was nearly everywhere in the Cascades still stands along the shores of Bumping Lake — a pretty, natural lake expanded when a small (60') dam was built at its natural outlet some decades ago. Located just outside the present William O. Douglas Wilderness, the forest itself knows no such limit; it is, has been always, ecologically a part of the now-protected, and adjacent, wilderness. This Bumping Forest is extra special to my way of thinking (after 45-plus years of exploring in and campaigning for every part of our state's Cascades), because it is not only roadless — and excellent habitat for the endangered spotted owl and bull trout; it is also located almost entirely on *level ground* — now THAT is something really rare in the Cascades!

We fought off one Congressional bill, which would have drowned out this awesome place, in the 1970s, but were unsuccessful in adding it to the William O. Douglas Wilderness in 1984.

Now that nearly all of the other unprotected ancient forests of the Cascades in our state have vanished, this superlative Bumping Lake Forest is even more precious.

But we will have to fight to save it.

Why, what is the threat this time? It is a new dam, proposed to enlarge Bumping Lake six-fold, drowning out and destroying those remaining forests around it — forever.

Even as this is written, a “Work Group,” under the aegis of the federal Bureau of Reclamation, and composed of irrigation districts, federal and state agencies, country commissioners, a “dam storage alliance” led by former Congressman Sid Morrison . . . and — rather shockingly to me — only one conservation organization, is meeting to decide whether or not they will recommend to Congress a very large

and expensive “Yakima Basin Enhancement Project,” consisting of several large and very costly dams and related projects. One of the proposals currently in the Work Group discussion draft is the “Bumping Lake Enlargement (BLE).”

What's up? How could this be, that some groups in our community have met, to even consider support for such a destructive venture — one so totally contrary to everything we have fought for, in that same region, for the past half century? Have they forgotten the long history of previous struggles to save this same place? This is all very disappointing; but those of us who DO love the wilderness and ancient forests of this state may have to rally again, and re-fight that history very soon, if the recommendation goes forward as some in the Work Group are advocating.

The actual basin ‘enhancement’ proposals vary, depending upon politics and timing. Some of its more recent formulations have included not only the BLE, but also a Black Rock Dam on the lower Yakima, Wymer dam on one of its tributaries,

a pipeline between Lakes Kachess and Keechelus, and covering over some irrigation canals.

“Water storage” in Bureauspeak of course means more big dams — just like the Bad Old Days. Expensive too: BLE alone would cost \$620 million.

But as far as I can tell, scarcely any recommendation in any official document for real water *conservation* by the basin's heavily subsidized farms. For these water guzzlers, western water law — “first in time, first in right” prevails, so no one can order irrigators to switch away from present wasteful water-spreading practices to more efficient methods used in other dry climates, such as drip irrigation and rigorous water metering.



View northeast from proposed enlargement — everything in the middle view would be flooded several dozen feet by the new dam, as well as totally drowning out the site where the picture was taken.

—BROCK EVANS PHOTO

...it's time to
fight back — hard.
And this time
around, finally
enshrine this
natural masterpiece
where it truly
belongs...

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Bumping Lake *Continued from page 17*

The Sierra Club, which has staunchly opposed the destruction of the Bumping forests, has noted this glaring discrepancy: “DOE and Bureau of Reclamation [have] identified numerous possible measures for improved water conservation. . . . These alternatives should be implemented before there is any further study of action on new storage projects. . . . We believe that. . . aggressive water conservation, adoption of water efficiency standards and metering. . . are much more cost effective than new dams. . . .”

The Endangered Species Coalition and the Gifford Pinchot Task Force also oppose this new dam. GPTF observes “The Bumping River is a particularly important area when viewed from a climate change perspective because of the cold meltwaters provided for fish and because of the role the river system plays in. . . connecting the large roadless areas which surround it. . . expansion of the reservoir would flood 2,800 acres of important forest habitat. . . . [and] these older forests are important for carbon storage. Even more important. . . is the habitat the [ancient] forests provide for old growth dependent species.”

But a few other groups in our community* have come, seemingly enthusiastically, to the bargaining table. The inducement to

bargain away the Bumping is the prospect of some “mitigation,” elsewhere. . . in other words, an agreement to allow the destruction of the ancient forests of the Bumping (not to mention endangered sage grouse habitat in the proposed Wymer reservoir) may be acceptable in order to get some kind of commitment to preserve other places as “mitigation.” In fact, a representative of Conservation Northwest has indicated that they are definitely interested in having the Teanaway serve as mitigation for the loss of Bumping ancient forest and Wymer sage steppe.

The Teanaway? This is a rather dry eastside valley northeast of Cle Elum. It is largely checkerboard land, its private sections owned by timber companies for about all of the 20th century, thus likely mostly heavily logged and roaded. Nowadays its timber industry owners consider many of these ‘checkerboard’ lands to be more valuable as second homes and subdivisions.

“Maybe,” the reasoning goes, “if we agree to let go of long-held values and a much loved place, the ‘other side’ might agree to help save parts of the Teanaway (or other places) from those new houses.” It all seems a bit vague, and no guarantees of course – just unenforceable promises,

which would have to endure a difficult political process.

So there’s been a lot of talk in this group about mitigation ratios, equivalent habitats, and the like. Led by American Rivers and National Wildlife Federation (whose representative recently asserted that the Bumping ancient forests are only a small area), some seem very enthusiastic to cut a deal. I have been told that the Work Group continues to push for such a water “deal” consensus before the end of the year.

To which we must say: NO WAY, NO DEAL!

In the case of the Bumping ancient forests, there is simply NO “equivalent habitat,” no equivalent *anything*, that can ever be replaced. Pray tell me, where else is there – so far south of Stevens Pass – a wild place like this magnificent west-side ecotype lakeshore ancient forest-cathedral of huge trees of many species, home and life-giver to dozens of rare dependent species, a superb natural connector of all the area’s habitats and species?

The answer is – No Place. Nowhere else.

To me, any talk of such bargaining is like saying “Oh, don’t worry about that Mona Lisa painting in the Louvre. It’s just a small piece of canvas with a portrait on it. We’re going to give it up for destruction, in return for some ‘mitigation,’ perhaps a couple dozen other paintings by a bunch of unknown artists. Maybe not as good as the Mona Lisa, but look-it at how many more paintings we’ll get.”

NO WAY! The Bumping forests are Nature’s Own Masterpiece! They are one of a kind; no “formula ratios” and other “equivalency” talk can ever replace it, once destroyed.

I say it’s time to fight back — hard. And this time around, finally enshrine this natural masterpiece where it truly belongs: in the wilderness all around it, protected at last, and safe forever.

—Brock Evans

*American Rivers, Conservation Northwest, The Nature Conservancy, National Wildlife Federation, The Wilderness Society, Washington Environmental Council.

For more info, visit the BuRec link. . . . www.usbr.gov/pn/programs/yrbwep/index/index.html or Sierra Club link (to David E. Ortman’s excellent article): www.washingtonsierraclub.org/uppercol/bumpinglake/overview.html

I am quite certain that these are accurate depictions of what was there, as of June 1988. I deliberately took pictures of the places to be flooded out, just as I did when I hiked through the cedar forests of the Big Beaver, 22 years before, in 1966.



Phelps Basin, Glacier Peak Wilderness
—PHILIP FENNER PHOTO

North Cascades Glacier Climate Project

Tom Hammond



Lupine growing at the base of Columbia Glacier, Henry M. Jackson Wilderness Area. —Sketch by JILL PELTO

The North Cascade Glacier Climate Project for the 27th year examined glaciers across the North Cascades during the first three weeks in August. This year, in addition to our research team (Ben Kane, Mauri Pelto, Ben Pelto, Tom Hammond, Jill Pelto), we had a film crew (Cory Kelly, Cristina Crane, Chris Edmonds, and Max McSimov). We began the trip under pleasant conditions with an evening backpack to Blanca Lake. There was no snow at Virgin Lake which indicates below normal snowpack in the 4000-5000 foot range in the area. The Columbia Glacier had snowpack very similar to 2007 and 2009. This is a largely avalanche-fed glacier and clearly this winter did not feature many good avalanche-inducing storms. The lake at the terminus continues to expand and will melt out considerably during the late summer. We measured the snowpack depth at 214 locations and found the average retained snowpack was 7.1 feet, which is 2 feet below the average and 3.5 feet below what is needed for an equilibrium year. I have spent three months at this location in the last 27 years

and this year we were hit by our first thunderstorm.

From Blanca Lake we headed north to Baker Lake for a quick swim and then hiked in to the terminus of the Easton Glacier in the evening. Our first dry day of the field season featured a big push up the Easton Glacier. Unlike the Columbia Glacier, snowpack was good on Easton Glacier; only a few areas of blue ice were evident. This is not an avalanche-fed glacier, and it ends higher than the Columbia Glacier begins. We found an average of 3.2 feet of snow on the lower 5700-foot bench, 7.3 feet on the 6000-foot bench, 10.5 feet on the 6,600-foot bench, and 17 feet above the central icefall in the 7200-8000-foot range. Above 8000 feet the crevasses were still mostly closed. Due to the deep snow we were able to probe our way into the heart of the central icefall at 7000 feet and then had a fantastic lunch in the sunny whiteout.

The next field location was Lower Curtis Glacier. The mist let up upon our arrival for a few hours exposing the Lower Curtis Glacier. By nightfall the mist had returned

and persisted through the night. Morning gave a brief clearing; yes! a good day.

We dashed up through the wet vegetation to the glacier, only to find the blue sky had been measurable in minutes not hours. The traverse beneath the large seracs of the Lower Curtis Glacier terminus was just possible and we were able to go into a small ice cave at the bottom of the seracs. The glacier had retreated 10 meters since last year. The film crew was well positioned for this traverse. Lower Curtis Glacier looked more like the Columbia with modest snowpack. The snowpack around Lake Ann was also unexceptional. It seemed that below 5000 feet snowpack was quite modest again. The avalanche-fed Lower Curtis just did not get its share of avalanches, the main basin of the glacier average only 7.8 feet of snow left.

The next field area was off Ptarmigan Ridge. There were no footprints beyond the Chain Lakes trail after three days of rain. We saw a herd of 18 goats en route to camp. The trail out Ptarmigan Ridge had more snow than usual unlike the Lake Ann trail. Our usual campsite provided a perfect setting for three days and four nights. The first day we worked on the Lower two-thirds of Rainbow Glacier, measuring snowpack, glacier width and glacier surface stream velocities. Snowpack was good but not great below 5600 feet. The Rainbow Glacier provided one location where a glacier stream dropped into a moulin, to reappear further down-glacier. Our velocities test indicated the flow rate was one-third the speed of adjacent surface streams over the same span. From the end of the Rainbow at 4400 feet, it is a long slog back to the portals at 6200 feet then across the Sholes Glacier to camp. The following day we set off early to cross the Sholes, pass through the Portals, descend to the Rainbow Glacier and traverse up it measuring the very good snowpack from 5600-6600 feet, average depths were 21 feet of snow remaining in this section, four feet above normal. We spied a mountain goat trying to navigate an area where a snow finger reaches up to the rock, the area we planned on crossing on our hike out. We navigated past and measured many large crevasses on our way to the head of the Rainbow Glacier. Beyond the top of the glacier we descended onto the Mazama Glacier for lunch, hopping over small crevasses like an obstacle course.

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Stehekin road tour with Senator Cantwell

Debate still swirls around the controversy of building a new section of the Stehekin road where floods completely destroyed the road at several sites between High Bridge and Bridge Creek. On July 8, 2010, Senator Maria Cantwell led a tour of the road washout and the proposed alternative road site. Participants in the hike were Jim Davis, State Senator Linda Evans Parlette, selected Stehekin valley residents who supported reopening the road, and representatives from the National Park Service, Pacific Crest Trail Association, National Parks Conservation Association, and The Wilderness Society.

The washout areas were very impressive. It was clear that the Stehekin road could never be repaired at these washout sites. Senator Evans Parlette and the Stehekin Valley residents on the hike would like the National Park Service to move the road up the hill from the washout sites and along an old wagon road corridor that is currently used, in part, for the Pacific Crest Trail. That seems simple enough, but the devil is in the details. The old wagon road corridor passes through a congressionally designated wilderness area, where road construction and motorized vehicles are not allowed. Only Congress can decommission wilderness. And, finding a new location for the Pacific Crest Trail will not be an easy task.

Senator Cantwell was exploring the Stehekin valley as part of an effort to determine whether she should sponsor Senate legislation that would decommission wilderness lands along the proposed new road corridor and provide funds to the National Park Service for constructing the new portion of Stehekin road. Representative Doc Hastings from eastern Washington sponsored successful House legislation earlier in the legislative session that would decommission the wilderness lands and charge the National Park Service with reopening the road.

The Stehekin valley residents on the hike urged Senator Cantwell to reopen

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Glacier climate project

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*The Middle Peak of Mt. Daniel rises above the Daniels Glacier, Alpine Lakes Wilderness Area.
—Sketch by JILL PELTO*

The main entertainment at lunch was the 75 to 80 mountain goats on Dobbs Cleaver. This was the usual herd that is on the Sholes but had moved one ridge over. After lunch we descended the Mazama Glacier into a seldom-travelled region, to the snowline at the top of a large icefall. A new outcrop of rock with a waterfall had emerged in the midst of the glacier just below a section of this icefall. Our goal was to see how far up significant thinning extended on Mazama Glacier. The answer: 6300 feet. Above this there is no sign of significant glacier thinning. Sholes Glacier was the next focus of our attention. We measured the snowpack on several long traverses across and up the glacier. The result was identifying an average snow depth

of 9.5 feet. Given the relatively cool conditions in September enabled the glacier to retain enough snowpack to have a positive balance for the year.

At Mount Daniels we realized that we were caught in mosquito-heaven at camp as they constantly swarmed the instant we stepped foot outside the tent. We hiked up to Ice Worm Glacier early and found the average snow depth on the glacier was 6.9 feet. After a day of measurements, we went down to face the swarm. Two new rock islands had surfaced on Daniels Glacier that had not been exposed until last summer. The lower stagnant terminus zone that had separated from the main glacier in 2003 had melted completely away in 2009. The main terminus has now retreated 500 meters since 1984. The long lower terminus extending north toward Pea Soup Gap has also retreated 400-500 m across its entire width.

We crossed over a small rock ridge onto the Lynch Glacier. We then traversed right across to the ridge looking down onto Mount Hinman, probing the snow depths and assessing crevasses as we went. A new lake had formed at the base of the former terminus area of Foss Glacier. Foss Glacier had a tough year in 2009 and is not a substantial cohesive glacier area anymore. We descended the Lynch Glacier toward Pea Soup Lake reaching the shore of the lake after a steep crampon descent. The glacier

had thinned and narrowed and was less steep, but had retreated little in the last five years. Snowpack was limited on all of the Mount Daniels glaciers. We did not hit a zone of more than 10 feet of snow until near the head of the glacier at 7400 feet. The descent of the Daniels is a steep 34 degrees. We zigzagged, getting additional measurements, finding limited areas of more than 10 feet of snowpack. The Daniels Glacier will continue to lose area, rapidly retreating toward the upper slopes of the east peak and middle peak of Daniels. A trip to the Ice Worm in the morning provided an opportunity to assess the melting from our stream flow measurements. The stream was high — indicating the loss of 5 inches of snowpack per day.

A week of wet, unstable weather, and a week of constant sunshine were appropriate. This was an up-is-down year for the glaciers. Low elevation glaciers, glaciers fed by avalanching and glaciers south of Glacier Peak did not fare well and will lose mass this year (Columbia, Daniels, Ice Worm, Lower Curtis and Lynch). Glaciers that have good accumulation areas above 6000 feet and are in the northern part of the range did well (Easton, Rainbow, Sholes). At Cascade Pass, Cache Col fell in the middle with ok snowpack reflecting its mixed situation of relying on avalanching, but being higher in elevation.

Does this border on the KAFKA-ESQUE? PCT Border Crossing Warning

To Whom it May Concern

Attached is the letter Border Patrol is sending out to the Pacific Crest Trail Association and copies to various associations/organizations concerning the

Pacific Crest Trail and in general crossing the international border at other than a designated Port of Entry. If you have any questions or concerns please feel free to contact the Spokane Sector Public Information Office at (509) 353-2747.

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U.S. Border Patrol, Oroville Station
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10/10 North Newport Highway
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June 1, 2010



**U.S. Customs and
Border Protection**

Pacific Crest Trail Association
5325 Elkhorn Blvd., PMB #256
Sacramento, California 95842-2526

Dear Members:

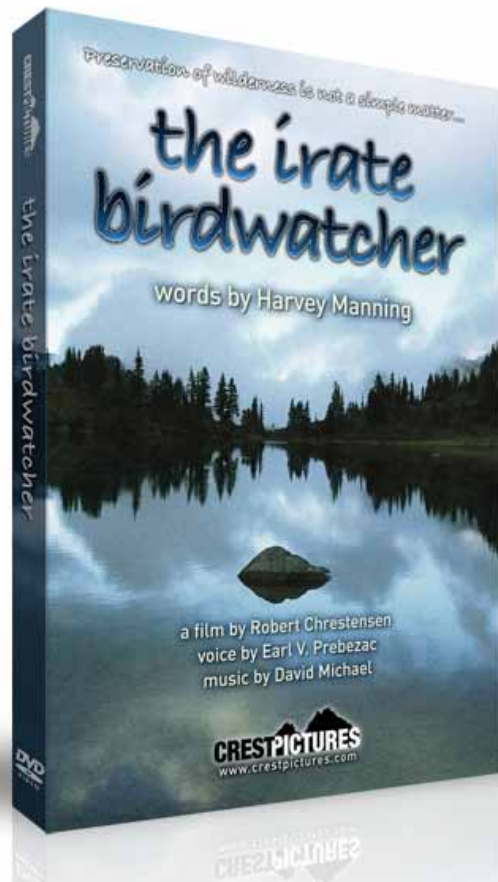
The summer season is approaching which will likely attract many hikers to the Pacific Crest Trail. Though it is not the intention of the U.S. Border Patrol to hinder access or enjoyment of the national forests, it is important to inform the public of federal laws as they pertain to crossing the international border. It is the desire of the U.S. Border Patrol to spread awareness of these laws to reduce inadvertent problems at the U.S./Canada border.

There are three statutes in particular that hikers should keep in mind when planning their itineraries:

- **19 U.S.C. Section 1459** – States that individuals arriving other than by conveyance must enter the United States only at a border crossing point...and present themselves and all articles accompanying them for inspection.
- **8 U.S.C. Section 1225(a)(3)** - States that every applicant for admission to, or transit through, the United States, must be inspected by immigration officers.
- **8 C.F.R. Section 235.1(a)** - States that application to lawfully enter the United States shall be made in person to an immigration officer at a U.S. Port of Entry when the port is open for inspection.

Though their intentions may be harmless, people who cross the international border at places other than a designated Port of Entry risk a criminal penalty of up to one year in jail and a \$5,000 fine (19 U.S.C. 1459(g)) and a civil penalty of \$5,000 for the first violation and \$10,000 for each subsequent violation (19 U.S.C. 1459(f)).

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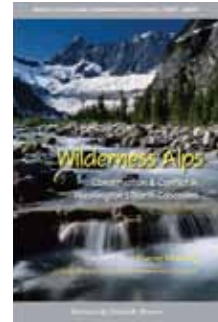
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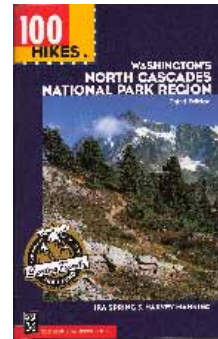
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Stehekin road tour

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the road to provide access to high country areas (e.g., Horseshoe Basin near Cascade Pass) where they have recreated for decades. State Senator Linda Evans Parlette emphasized the importance of the road for tourism and the economic well-being of Stehekin valley businesses. Proponents clearly see Stehekin road construction as essential for providing access to cherished public lands in more remote areas of the North Cascades. However, multiple Stehekin valley residents who did not go on the hike do not support rebuilding the Stehekin road.

All of the conservation and recreation group representatives on the hike fully acknowledged the importance of maintaining access to public lands. However, they perceive Stehekin road in a much different light than local residents. Several emphasized that decommissioning wilderness in the Stehekin valley could create a very challenging precedent for decommissioning wilderness lands in other areas to meet the needs of local residents. Such a precedent could quickly snowball into a movement to undermine wilderness designation throughout the country. They pointed out that federal elected officials (including Senator Cantwell) would likely

be besieged by every constituent who remained disgruntled by some aspect of the wilderness area that had been designated near their home. Other hike participants argued that any move to decommission wilderness should be accompanied by major mitigation efforts (e.g., creating substantial new wilderness areas or parks in the area). Such a precedent would discourage frivolous efforts to decommission wilderness lands.

Representatives from the Pacific Crest Trail Association emphasized their concerns about the feasibility of relocating the trail. They argued that we could not just assume that an alternative route would be available. They said we should not jump into legislation without first working out on-the-ground details about where the trail could be placed. During a later, intensive, week-long field assessment, they were unable to identify any appropriate alternative routes for the Pacific Crest Trail along this section of the Stehekin river.

And, of course, there was quite a bit of discussion about the cost of reopening the Stehekin road. Several conservation and recreation group representatives questioned whether funds would be better spent restoring access in other areas of

the North Cascades National Park or on national forest lands that have been devastated in recent years by all too frequent 100-year and 500-year floods.

Senator Cantwell listened carefully to every argument put forth. In the end, she indicated that more information would be needed before she could make a decision on whether rebuilding the road was the right thing to do. At this time, it appears that there will NOT be a Senate hearing on the Stehekin road issue during this legislative session. Stay tuned. This issue will still be with us in coming years.

— Jim Davis



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