

# North Cascades

NATIONAL PARK

## Ross Lake & Lake Chelan

NATIONAL RECREATION AREAS • WASHINGTON

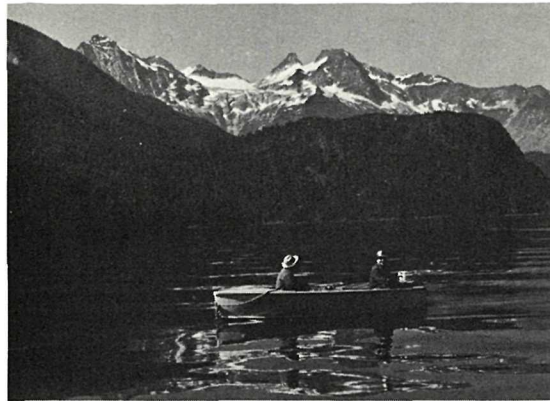
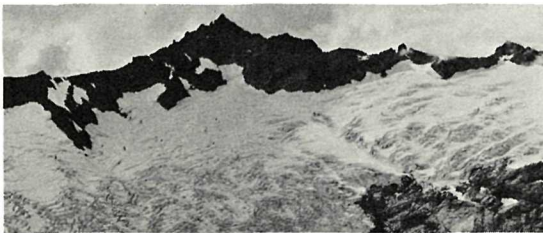
Established by an act of the 90th Congress in 1968, the North Cascades group has four distinct units—North and South Units of the park and Ross Lake and Lake Chelan National Recreation Areas.

This magnificent area of 1,053 square miles conserves an outstanding part of the extensive North Cascades mountain range near the Canadian border. More than 99 percent of the land in the North Cascades group is federally owned.

Included within the park are two former wilderness study areas—Picket Range Wilderness in the North Unit and Eldorado Peaks Wilderness in the South Unit.

Three dams, which impound Ross, Diablo, and Gorge Lakes, provide electrical power for Seattle. Diablo and Ross Lakes have minimum drawdown in summer and offer quality recreation.

Ross Lake is 24 miles long and 2 miles across at its greatest width and covers about 12,000 acres. Diablo Lake is 910 acres and Gorge Lake 210 acres. Lake Chelan is 55 miles long and from 1 to 2 miles wide for most of its length; only the northerly 5 miles and about 2,000 acres are within Lake Chelan National Recreation Area.



## A BRIEF DESCRIPTION

The section of the Cascade Range encompassed by North Cascades National Park and the two National Recreation Areas has an array of alpine scenery unmatched in the conterminous 48 States: deep glaciated canyons, more than 300 glaciers, hundreds of jagged peaks, mountain lakes and streams, and plant communities.

The Cascades rank among the world's great mountain ranges. Extending from Canada's Fraser River south beyond Oregon, they are major topographic features, shaping the climate and vegetation over much of the Pacific Northwest.

Formed of weather-resistant rocks, the high stretch of the Cascades intercepts some of the continent's wettest prevailing winds. The resultant heavy precipitation has produced a region of hanging glaciers and icefalls, great ice aprons and ice caps, hanging valleys, waterfalls, alpine lakes nestled in glacial cirques, and glacier-carved canyons like Stehekin at the head of Lake Chelan. This lake occupies a glacial trough exceeding 8,500 feet in depth from lake bottom to valley crest—one of the deepest gorges on the continent.

The plant communities show a tremendous variation between the moisture-laden west side of the mountains and the dry east slopes. These plant communities range from rain forest through sub-alpine coniferous, verdant meadows, and alpine tundra back down to pine forests and sunny, dry shrublands.

Mountain goats, deer, and black bears are common in the wilderness. Less common are the

wolverine, marten, fisher, grizzly bear, cougar, and moose. White-tailed ptarmigan and a host of other smaller birds and mammals make their home here. In winter, large numbers of bald eagles can be seen along the Skagit River where they feed on salmon.

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## WEATHER AND SEASONS

Outdoor recreation can be enjoyed year around. The lower elevations and the big lakes are accessible from early April to mid-October, but at higher elevations, the season is from mid-July to mid-September. The western side of the North Cascades gets more rain, has more lakes and streams, and more abundant vegetation. Consequently, it has less sunshine and cooler days than the eastern side of the mountains, where more sunshine, warm rock surfaces, and sparse vegetation offer warm days and cool nights typical of a dry climate.

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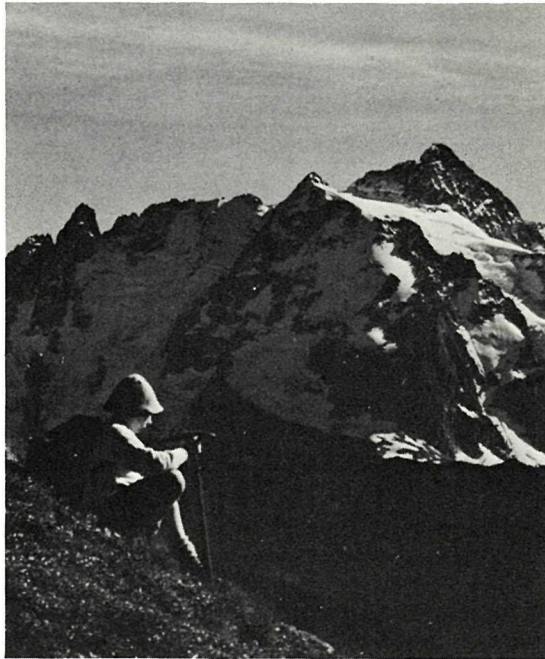
## HOW TO GET THERE

Access to the North Cascades area from Burlington on the west and Twisp on the east follows Wash. 20 with branch routes to Baker River and Cascade River. Hiking access and roadside views of the northwest corner are available from Wash. 542 east from Bellingham. Access to Stehekin Valley is by boat, float-plane or trail. Vehicle access to Ross Lake is by unimproved road from Canada.



## WHERE TO STAY

The larger towns and cities near the North Cascades group have the usual tourist accommodations, but are 2- to 3-hour drives from park boundaries. Smaller communities within or adjacent to the areas have limited guest accommodations. The chambers of commerce for each of the counties and towns surrounding the North Cascades group have information on accommodations, packers, guides, and other outdoor services.



## THINGS TO DO

**Sightseeing.** By car on the North Cascades Highway (Wash. 20), Wash. 542, and Cascade River Road; by scheduled boat service on Diablo and Chelan Lakes; and by private plane or chartered local plane flights.

Perhaps the most dramatic experience is afforded by views of the high-country glaciers and snowfields contrasting with the greens of open mountain ridges and the heavily forested valleys. Such views are possible only when seen as a panorama from an airplane or from selected vantage points on sites that can only be reached on foot.

**Camping.** Primitive back-country campsites are accessible by well-defined trails. Colonial Creek and Goodell are developed drive-in campgrounds off Wash. 20 in Ross Lake National Recreation Area.

**Back-country travel.** About 345 miles of hiking and horse trails exist throughout the four units of the North Cascades group. Permits, required for all back-country camping, may be obtained at any of the park offices or ranger stations. Horsemen may bring their own animals. Horses and mules are for rent at rural communities on the west, east, and south approaches to the park and recreation units. Professional guide and packtrain services are available.

**Fishing** for sport is a principal activity. Besides the two big lakes, there are many small mountain and valley lakes, and countless streams. The principal game fish are trout—rainbow, Eastern brook, cutthroat, and Dolly Varden. A Washington State fishing license is required, and State laws apply.

**Climbing.** Both the North and South Units of the park have many high peaks to challenge the mountain climber. For safety, it is recommended that parties have three or more climbers, be equipped with internationally recognized climbing gear, and register names of the party, destination, name of mountain, and approximate days of climb.

**Water sports.** The waters of the lakes and rivers are very cold. Even in August, water activities are mainly confined to boating and fishing.

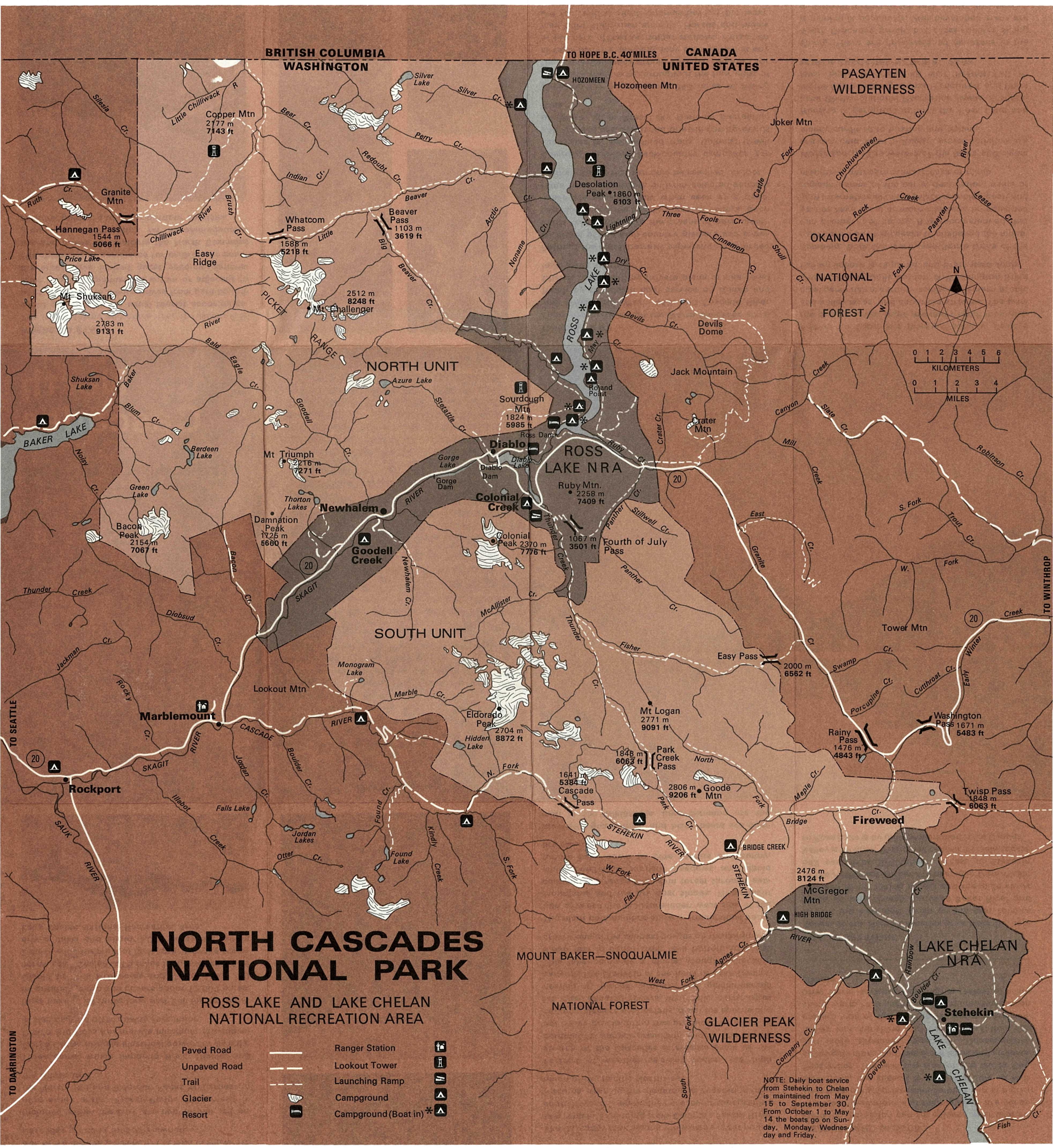
**Hunting** is permitted in both the Ross Lake and Lake Chelan National Recreation Areas. A Washington State hunting license is required, and State laws apply. **HUNTING IS NOT PERMITTED IN NORTH CASCADES NATIONAL PARK.**

**Skiing.** There are no developed ski areas in the North Cascades group, but cross-country skiing is gaining in popularity. Well-developed areas are in national forests to the east, south, and west.

## ADMINISTRATION

North Cascades National Park and Ross Lake and Lake Chelan National Recreation Areas are administered by a superintendent whose address is Sedro Woolley, WA 98284.





# NORTH CASCADES NATIONAL PARK

ROSS LAKE AND LAKE CHELAN NATIONAL RECREATION AREA

- |              |       |                       |  |
|--------------|-------|-----------------------|--|
| Paved Road   | —     | Ranger Station        |  |
| Unpaved Road | - - - | Lookout Tower         |  |
| Trail        | ...   | Launching Ramp        |  |
| Glacier      |       | Campground            |  |
| Resort       |       | Campground (Boat in)* |  |

NOTE: Daily boat service from Stehekin to Chelan is maintained from May 15 to September 30. From October 1 to May 14 the boats go on Sunday, Monday, Wednesday and Friday.





#### TRAVELING THE BACK COUNTRY

A permit, required for back-country camping, is available free of charge at all ranger stations. Back-country information is provided at park offices in Sedro Woolley, Chelan, and Marblemount. Information on the Paysayten and Glacier Peak Wilderness Areas can be obtained at all U.S. Forest Service offices.

Pack out all your trash. Leave the park clean and natural. Hang all food out of reach of bears.

Stream crossings can be hazardous during periods of high water. Check conditions with a park ranger *before* starting out.

Snow may linger in high places. Crossing snowfields may require special equipment. Be prepared and *think safety*.

Horsemen should carry adequate feed for their trip. Forage is scarce in most of the park. A special permit is required for livestock use.

As the Nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has basic responsibilities for water, fish, wildlife, mineral, land, park, and recreational resources. Indian and Territorial affairs are other major concerns of America's "Department of Natural Resources." The Department works to assure the wisest choice in managing all our resources so each will make its full contribution to a better United States—now and in the future.

National Park Service  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

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