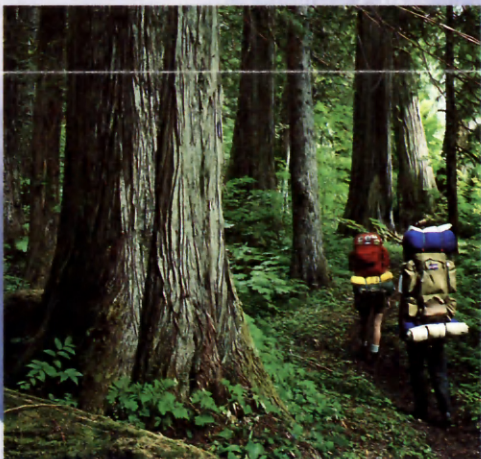




Goldenrod in the upper Stehekin Valley



Backpackers and red cedars



Veronica and paintbrush



Climbers on Mt. Challenger, North Picket Range



Horsepacking on the park's east side

Cover, Picket Range, NPS photo

A Wilderness Mountain Kingdom

"If there is magic on this planet," Loren Eiseley wrote, "it is contained in water." The diverse magic of the North Cascades—its craggy peaks and blanketing forests, bald eagles and mountain lions—begins as sky-borne waters stored in mountain glaciers and snow pack. Precipitation that falls on protected upper watersheds and headwaters works its way down, all year long, to the Skagit and Stehekin rivers. It arrives still cold, still clean, still clear, life's crucial fuel for astonishing biological diversity. These high mountains, wet on west slopes and dry on the east, provide plants and animals with many niches to exploit. And their complex geology breaks down into many soil types, encouraging the

area's species diversity. These parklands—North Cascades National Park, Ross Lake National Recreation Area, and Lake Chelan National Recreation Area—are the 10-million-acre North Cascades Ecosystem's protected core. The ecosystem extends from the Columbia River on the east to Puget Sound and from Canada's lower Fraser River on the north to the Snoqualmie River. This is our last chance in the Northwest to save a landscape-scale working sample of nature's dynamic, interpenetrating pathways of life. There is nothing not connected here: bears, salmon, eagles, humans, forests, glaciers. Indigenous people used this land seasonally, taking salmon or gathering berries,

mountain goat hair, or chert (for stone tools and points) they traded over a wide area. The 260 archeological sites here trace this human presence back 8,000 years. The mission of the National Park Service is to preserve for this and future generations these parklands' majestic mountain scenery, glaciers (more than in any other national park outside Alaska), and other natural and historic features. Despite the dams, the Skagit River still hosts all five species of salmon and two of anadromous or sea-running trout: the steelhead and cutthroat. We know these fish facts, but how much don't we know? And can we save what we don't know we have? A most important job of the National Park Service is inven-

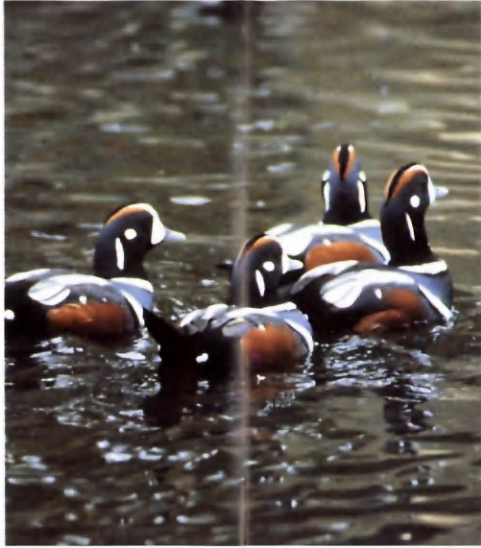
torying and monitoring—finding out what plants and animals are here and then tracking their health. This groundwork isn't glamorous, but it is vital to our vision for preserving nature. In 1988 Congress designated 93 percent of these parklands for protection under the 1964 Wilderness Act. Wilderness is meant to protect forever both the land's natural conditions and opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation and scientific, educational, and historical values. In wilderness many people can sense being a part of the whole community of life on Earth. Preserving wilderness shows restraint and humility—for what we don't know about the land, which ultimately feeds, clothes, and houses all.



Kayakers at Fields Point, Lake Chelan



Heather, with Mt. Challenger and Whatcom Peak beyond



Harlequin ducks



Beautiful, nameless waterfalls abound



Copper Lake, one of many alpine lake treasures here

North Cascades National Park

Breathtakingly Beautiful Mountain Scenery

North Cascades National Park contains some of America's most beautiful mountain scenery—high jagged peaks, ridges, slopes, and countless cascading waterfalls. Glaciers scored by crevasses, permanent snowfields, sheer-walled cliffs, spires, and pinnacles challenge mountaineers. Few roads reach into the park, but views can be had



North face of the southern Picket Range

Planning Your Visit

Information

Find information about National Park Service and Forest Service facilities at North Cascades Headquarters in Sedro-Woolley or national park or forest information or ranger stations at Newhalem, Marblemount, Stehekin, Glacier, or Chelan. Or contact the Superintendent, North Cascades National Park, 2105 State Route 20, Sedro-Woolley, WA 98284; 360-856-5700; or www.nps.gov/noca.

Publication Sales

Books, maps, and pamphlets are sold at park headquarters and ranger or information stations by the nonprofit Northwest Interpretive Association. For a free sales list, write to the association at the park address.

Seasons and Weather

Trails and lakes at lower elevations are usually free of snow from early April to mid-October. Some trails at higher elevations will not open until mid-July. Over 300

miles of maintained trails take you into the park and recreation areas and adjacent national forest lands. Parking at some trailheads requires a Northwest Forest Pass (fee) available at national park or forest offices and some stores.

The western side of the North Cascades gets more rain than the eastern side. Look for more cloudy days and lower temperatures on the western side compared to the eastern side.

Naturalist Activities

Enjoy the self-guiding trails, evening programs, and other naturalist activities in the summer season—ask for information at campgrounds, Stehekin, and information and ranger stations.

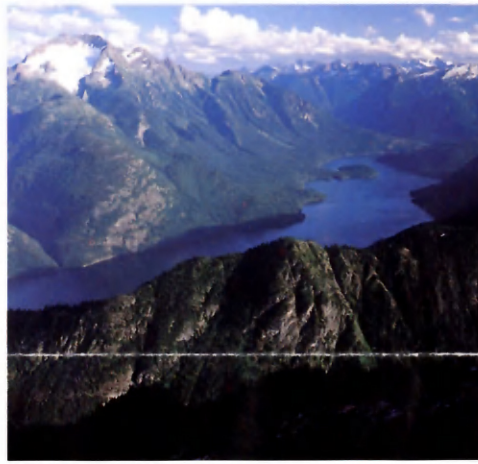
Accommodations

Services are limited, and lodgings are found only in the national recreation areas. Vehicle access campgrounds on North Cascades Highway are at Goodell, Newhalem, and Colonial creeks,

Ross Lake National Recreation Area

The Skagit River's Wild Stretches and North Cascades Highway

Ross Lake National Recreation Area protects its namesake lake and stretches of the Skagit River below the dams. As the North Cascades Highway corridor, it also divides the national park units. Bald eagles feed in mid-winter on salmon along the river near Bacon Creek and farther downstream (see



Ross Lake

Backcountry Permits

Backcountry permits are required for all overnight backcountry use and for boat-in camp sites (except on Lake Chelan).

The permit system helps to prevent overcrowding and damage to fragile mountain environments. Climbers: please register before making ascents. Most climbing accidents occur when climbers ignore recommended procedures. Ask a ranger for advice and a report on local conditions.

Warning!

The waters of Ross, Diablo, and Gorge Lakes and Lake Chelan can be extremely cold from glacial runoff and melt-

ing snowfields. Sudden summer storms can lead to hypothermia, the life-threatening, rapid loss of core body heat. Take proper precautions.

Boating

Diablo Lake has a boat launch ramp at Colonial Creek Campground; Ross Lake at Hozomeen (accessible only from Canada); and Gorge Lake a small one near the town of Diablo. You can rent small boats at Ross Lake Resort and North Cascades Stehe-

Lake Chelan National Recreation Area

A Passenger-Ferry Ride To Wilderness and History

You can hike, boat, or fly to Stehekin at the head of Lake Chelan, but you can't drive there by car. A wilderness-edge community 50 miles uplake from Chelan, it is set amid towering mountains. Stehekin Valley history saw short-lived fur trapping and mining and then homesteading. As the 20th century began, outdoor recreation and scenery saw



Passenger ferry on Lake Chelan

Hunting and Fishing

Hunting is not permitted in North Cascades National Park, except on a leash on the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail. Pets are permitted on a leash in the recreation areas.

Regulations and Safety

Fires are permitted only at authorized locations. No firewood gathering in campgrounds—use local firewood vendors.

Bears

Bears and other wild animals are attracted to food odors and to many odors—such as toothpaste—that may not say

Use extreme caution outside the developed areas. Falls in rugged terrain have resulted in fatalities. Cross all unbridged streams with caution, especially during spring's runoff: slippery stream bottoms and swift currents can knock you down and sweep you away.

"food" to you. Lock food and associated items—dishes, cooking equipment, ice chests—in your vehicle at night or anytime you are away from camp. In the backcountry keep a clean camp and hang your food and other odorous items properly. Or store them in a bear-resistant food canister you can borrow from the park staff. Do not feed wildlife, even unintentionally. Help keep wildlife wild.

Exploring North Cascades

North Cascades Highway

Access To reach the North Cascades, drive Washington State Route 20, the North Cascades Highway, from Burlington on the west and Twisp on the east. It is considered the "most scenic mountain drive in Washington." Vehicle access to Ross Lake is by unimproved road from Canada only. Stehekin is reached only by boat, floatplane from Chelan, or trail; there is no vehicle access.

DO NOT USE THIS MAP FOR HIKING

The highway passes Gorge, Diablo, and Ross lakes in Ross Lake National Recreation Area. Only Gorge and Diablo can be reached by vehicle from State Route 20. Stop at the Diablo Lake Overlook for great views of Diablo Lake, Sourdough Mountain, Davis, Colonial, and Pyramid peaks; and the Skagit River drainage. Happy Creek Forest Walk is a short, wheelchair accessible boardwalk through

an old-growth forest. Accessible trails are also at Gorge Creek Overlook and near the North Cascades Visitor Center in Newhalem. Wayside exhibits and views of Ross Lake and other points of interest are found at roadside turnouts in the Ross Lake area. The North Cascades Visitor Center at Newhalem introduces the natural and cultural history of this diverse and rugged park. Ask

about other accessible trails in the area. Rainy and Washington passes in Okanogan National Forest to the east provide rest stop and picnic facilities. The Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail crosses the highway at Rainy Pass, elevation 4,860 feet. A one-mile walk to a sub-alpine lake, Rainy Lake National Recreation Trail begins near the Rainy Lake rest stop and is

wheelchair accessible. At Washington Pass, elevation 5,477 feet, near the rest stop and picnic area, an overlook gives breathtaking views of the Cascade Mountains. The Baker Lake area of Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest offers camping, boating, fishing, hiking, and picnicking. Posted speed limits for State Route 20 are often lower than the statewide limit: obey them. Use the roadside turnouts to see the scenery safely. Drive with caution and watch for pedestrians or hikers on road shoulders, rocks in the roadway, wildlife, bicyclists, and drivers who may be less careful. North Cascades National Park and Ross Lake and Lake Chelan national recreation areas are units of the National Park System, which consists of more than 370 parks

Wilderness Some 93 percent of the park and recreation areas is designated as the Stephen Mather Wilderness Area in the National Wilderness Preservation System. Mather served as the first director of the National Park Service.

