



# THE WILD CASCADES

THE JOURNAL OF THE NORTH CASCADES  
CONSERVATION COUNCIL

FALL 2016

## THE WILD CASCADES ■ Fall 2016

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FRONT: Colcbuck Lake with larches. —JOSHUA DEBNER PHOTO

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### The Wild Cascades

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*Journal of the North Cascades Conservation Council*

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Tom Hammond, and Rick McGuire

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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 administrative, legal, and public participation channels to protect the lands, waters, plants and wildlife.

Over the past half century 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.

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.

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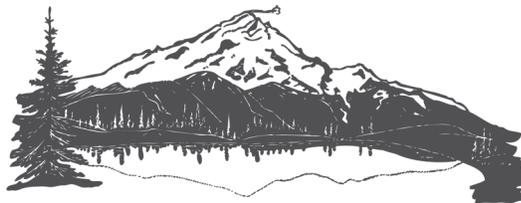
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NORTH CASCADES CONSERVATION COUNCIL

Founded in 1957

SEATTLE, WASHINGTON

## THE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

FALL 2016

Since the last edition of *The Wild Cascades* went to press, I've attended and spoken at memorial services for Betty Manning and Laura Zalesky. I am very fortunate indeed to have known these women, and to call them friends.

Note in the list of board members that Karl Forsgaard has moved to an advisory role. I speak for the entire board when I say Karl has been a tremendous leader, advocate and active participant in real conservation. His efforts with the Okanogan Travel Management, the dreaded "Yakima Plan", ORV issues in general, and a host of other items have been and (I'm happy say) will continue to be remarkable. Thank you for your years of service with the NCCC, Karl, and we look forward to many more.

In the "Be Careful What You Wish For" category, I have been very concerned with keeping the NCCC relevant and perpetual and energized by way of involving younger generations. This means getting people aware of our great outdoors and the marvels that are the National Parks of our state (disclaimer: North Cascades is my favorite, with Olympic NP a close second—especially the coastal strip). But at what cost? From what I've witnessed over the past couple of years, and as well reports from many other independent sources, many youth seem to be treating our backcountry like a theme park, tossing empty drink bottles with careless abandon, defecating adjacent to the trail complete with toilet paper strewn about, trampled meadows right over the top of signage cautioning to "stay off," paints on the trail and rocks (yes, paint!) and trash here, there and everywhere. How do we as a society instill the values of Wilderness and "Leave No Trace"? It would seem NCCC should take a lead in this, but we lack the social outreach necessary. You see, it is social media that's driving the blitz to some very specific trails and locations in the Cascades, to include (as you'll see in the glacier report) Blanca Lake, Snow Lakes and a few other "close by" to the metroplex. The least I can do, and as an organization as well, is to call attention to the situation and get more savvy groups involved with messaging the importance of the *Wilderness Ethic* and *Leave No Trace*. Consider this a call to arms for all who read this.

As we wrap up our yearlong celebration of the centennial of the National Park Service, we're offering excerpts from the memoirs of Brock Evans, a former NCCC board member who was instrumental in aligning the state politicians in support of legislation in 1968 that created North Cascades National Park. National Parks don't just happen—they happen because of a lot of passion, energy and engagement. They are sustained by volunteers like the ones who joined us October 1 to do some restoration planting at Diablo Overlook (see page 7). Thanks to those who joined us in support of North Cascades National Park.

Get out and discover what each national park in our state and other states have to offer. I can assure you the experiences are worthy, energizing, rewarding and essential.

# Monte Cristo road challenge

By Ed Henderson



The first and major construction phase of the CERCLA hazardous waste clean-up of the ancient Monte Cristo mining waste has been completed (see *TWC* Fall 2105, page 9). In order for heavy earth moving construction equipment to gain access to the site, a rudimentary “pioneer” road was bulldozed through an inventoried Roadless Area. Now that the heavy earth moving has been completed and the equipment has departed from the site, the Monte Cristo area has been returned to the control of the local Darrington Ranger District of the Mount Baker Snoqualmie National Forest (MBSNF).

The Forest Service (FS) has reopened the Monte Cristo area to the public. Mostly this access consist of walk-ins from Barlow Pass across the Sauk River on a slippery

*It looks like a road—but it’s narrow, with no ditches, and very little gravel on the surface. With poor—or rather, no—drainage, puddles will become potholes when subjected to the wheel impact of vehicle traffic. In wet weather it will quickly turn into a quagmire or more likely wash away and disappear.*

—ED HENDERSON PHOTO

log and along the old mine-to-market county road. However the Darrington Ranger District has been lending out keys to the locked gate across the temporary access road to the private property in-holders in the Monte Cristo township, thus allowing motor vehicle access by the public. NCCC is challenging this action, asking the FS to strictly limit the use of the

temporary access road to activities directly connected with and required as part of the CERCLA clean-up. Should the FS fail to close the road to the public, we are prepared to seek legal remedies to force such closure.

Our August 26 letter to Darrington District Ranger Peter Forbes asks for the following limitations in order to prevent irreparable harm to the environment:

- Forest Service should immediately rescind permission for access to private landowners on this road, confiscate keys, and/or change the lock for access to this road
- Limit access to the road to Forest Service for necessary re-vegetation, sampling and monitoring of the remediation sites
- Do not provide keys to the public, to landowners, or anyone who does not require access directly connected with remediation work, do not loan out or otherwise provide keys to the locked gate
- After the re-vegetation work this year, limit Forest Service access to twice a year, late spring and autumn for sampling and monitoring
- Limit time-of-day access to the period between two hours after sunrise to two hours before sunset to avoid disturbance of the potential marbled murrelet nesting.

Our reasons for taking these actions are several. Use of this temporary access road by anyone or for any activity not directly part of the CERCLA clean-up is illegal! Secretary of Agriculture Vilsack’s Memorandum and subsequent instructions which approved construction of this road clearly state that the road is temporary and upon completion of the work, estimated to take three years, the road will be decommissioned and removed from the Roadless Area. Furthermore nobody else is to be permitted to use the road. The road is solely and exclusively required for the remediation of the hazardous waste which constituted a threat to public safety. Lending out keys to the gate and permitting property in-holders and other members of the public to use the road for motor vehicle access is in clear violation of these instructions. If permitted to continue unchallenged, it establishes a use which will be difficult to reverse in the future.



# NCCC speaker featured at Burke Museum

Carnivores, glaciers, and indigenous trade are the topics this fall at the Burke Museum of Natural History and Culture at 17th Avenue NE and NE 45th Street in Seattle. Enjoy the Wild Nearby exhibit and its large-scale photos of the North Cascades plus specimens and artifacts from the Museum anytime until February 15, 2017—but don't miss the one-time presentations listed here.

## ***Obsidian, Chert and 10,000 Years of Trade in the Northwest*** with Bob Mierendorf

Nov 3, 7 p.m. Burke Room, free

Trade among indigenous people of the Northwest was systematic and widespread. Annual gatherings on the Nch'i-Wana, or Great River, drew people from an area that spanned 1000 miles to trade blankets, baskets, stories, songs, and stone for arrows, spears and tools. NPS Ranger and Archaeologist Bob Mierendorf studied Hozomeen Chert in the North Cascades for 25 years. He will review what stone tools tell us about how people lived in the Wild Nearby for thousands of years.

## ***Glaciers of the North Cascades*** with Tom Hammond

Nov 17, 7 p.m. Burke Room, free

The North Cascades are home to the longest running, most comprehensive study of glaciers on the planet—the North Cascades Glacier Climate Project. For over 15 seasons of this 34-year study, Tom Hammond has trekked to ten glaciers in the ecosystem to measure the mass and exact location of these vast plains of moving ice. The project is referenced by glaciologists the world over. Tom is a passionate observer of the mountains, an exemplar of citizen science, a photographer with a keen eye, and president of the North Cascades Conservation Council. Join him for his unique view of the Wild Nearby.

## ***Wolverines, Wolves, Grizzlies and Fishers*** with Steven Gnam and Jason Ransom

Dec 1, 7 p.m. Burke Room, free

The North Cascades are the traditional home of fierce carnivores who were

disrupted and displaced by civilization in the 19th and 20th centuries. These iconic mammals—wolverines, wolves, grizzlies and fishers—have recently experienced a comeback. With the help of the National Park Service, Washington State Fish and Wildlife, and other conservation minded organizations, they're moving back into their traditional territories. Photographer Steven Gnam and National Park Service Ranger Jason Ransom team up to present the latest news on these animals illustrated with stunning images.



## ***MONTE CRISTO, CONTINUED***

The road is narrow with steep grades and sharp turns around trees. Little work was done to improve the sub-grade; some gravel was simply spread on the forest floor. Three log stringer bridges cross deep gullies, but little or no work was done to improve drainage. Traffic on this road will increase the deterioration of the road, leading to erosion carrying sediment into fish-bearing streams. Even in this first year of the road's existence, repair work was necessary on washouts this spring before the road could be reopened to motor vehicle traffic.

The road is unsafe. It is a rudimentary "pioneer" track through the forest. It wasn't designed at all, but was simply pushed through the woods to allow heavy earthmoving equipment access to and from the townsite. It is a single lane roadway with steep grades, sharp curves and limited sight distances. Allowing the public to drive along this "road" is inviting accidents.

The road is located in an inventoried Roadless area that is potential habitat for the threatened Marble Murrelet species. Traffic on the road will disrupt the nesting of this very shy and secretive species.

Traffic on the road should be kept to an absolute minimum as required by the CERCLA remedial action.

And lastly, the FS has repeatedly stated that they only have funds available to maintain approximately 25% of the roads currently on the MBSNF. The rudimentary nature of the "pioneer" road will require more than ordinary maintenance to keep open. The FS's limited budget for road maintenance should be spent on more important existing roads. The cost of decommissioning the road at the conclusion of the CERCLA remedial action should be part of the CERCLA project budget.

So, for the above reasons and to protect and preserve the environment of this Roadless area of this small corner of the North Cascades in close proximity to a very popular recreational area, NCCC is challenging the FS to carryout the terms of the CERCLA special "exception" to the Roadless Rule. The FS must deny the use of the road to everyone except those required directly connected to the remediation and at the completion of that remedial action to remove the road from the Roadless area. We are prepared to seek legal action to enforce these terms.

## **Trump roots in Monte Cristo**

Who knew? German immigrant Friedrich Drumpf—aka Frederick Trump, grandfather of the Republican presidential candidate—lived and owned businesses in Monte Cristo during its mining boom years. One was a real estate office. The other was one of the town's five hotels. And the patrons? Well, let's just say that the many single miners found a social center at the hotel, getting rooms when, er, needed. Saying any more would be locker room talk! Drumpf/Trump was also elected Monte Cristo's justice of the peace in 1896, in a 32-5 landslide. Not long afterward he moved to Whitehorse, Yukon, to offer hospitality to miners during the Klondike Gold Rush.

# Stehekin update

By Carolyn McConnell

The Park Service is moving ahead with its plan to begin charging for residential garbage service in Stehekin. For years, the Park has provided this service completely free of charge, and it did so without any legal authority for giving this unusual freebie on taxpayers' dime. Now the free ride is coming to an end. Last fall, the Park published regulations to allow it to provide garbage service in Stehekin for a fee. Now it is fine tuning its fee structure to incentivize recycling and minimize garbage production, including by offering free composting and recycling. No word yet on exactly when the new regime goes into effect, but residents showed signs this summer they were clearing out sheds and closets in preparation—remarkable amounts of old junk were being dumped at “the Stehekin mall.”

Despite legislation passed two years ago providing for moving Wilderness boundaries to allow construction of a road through the lovely, wild upper Stehekin Valley, the Park Service has courageously held firm in defense of its mission and of good science, telling Congress building the road would be bad for the environment and a waste of public resources. With no funding for a road, nothing has been done on it. However, word is that there is continued pressure on Senators Murray and Cantwell and Representative Reichert to get funding for a new upper Stehekin road appropriated. We urge you to contact the legislators and tell them not to support any funding for this misguided project.

# Notes from the Federation of Western Outdoor Clubs annual conference

By Scott Crain

NCCC attended (through this article's author) the annual conference of the Federation of Western Outdoor Clubs in September on Bainbridge Island. Hosted and organized by Great Old Broads for Wilderness, the conference centered on the theme “Climate Change, Water Uncertainty, and Resilience through Conservation.”

NCCC gave a club report to FWOC on our recent activities and was warmly welcomed after a few years away. Of note:

David Ortman, formerly of Friends of the Earth and a Seattle-area attorney, presented on the Yakima Plan and other ill-advised water storage efforts. He included a shout-out to NCCC for its efforts on the Yakima Plan issue.

Andy Kerr and Stephen Sharnoff from UC Berkeley presented on the proposed Douglas Fir National Monument, a multi-year effort to obtain national monument status for an unprotected area of the Oregon cascades. The proposal is an effort to link vast stretches of montane forest to protect a larger ecosystem from resource extraction. Learn more about their proposal at [www.douglasfirnationalmonument.org](http://www.douglasfirnationalmonument.org).

Also of interest, Chuck Willer of the Coast Range Association spoke about the need to turn the conversation around regarding the drive to log public lands. Chuck discussed the concept of “Wall Street Forestry,” where private forest lands are turned over to remote investors, who are incentivized to log as much land, as quickly as possible. These arrangements are known as “Timber Investment Management Organizations” or, more colloquially, as “TIMOs.” TIMOs are arranged to provide investors with tax-free profits from resource extraction on these lands. TIMOs are driven to externalize costs and use the least costly, most intensive method to log private lands. Combined with their minimal payment of taxes to local counties, this method of forestry results in local jurisdictions looking to federal lands for resource extraction and revenue generation. Chuck suggests we turn the conversation back to what private forests are and aren't doing to meet the needs of local communities. Read about Chuck's work at [www.coastrange.org](http://www.coastrange.org).

NCCC made some good connections with northwest conservation organizations and we look forward to continuing to contribute to the good work of the FWOC.

## Find Your Park



*In honor of the Park Service centennial year, an NCCC member has created a website of National Park history and invites you to check it out at: <http://npsbhistory.com>! The NPS History Electronic Library is a portal to thousands of electronic publications and videos, covering the history of the National Park Service and the cultural and natural history of the national parks, monuments, and historic sites of the U.S. National Park System.*

## Blanca Lake culvert blown



*Forest service road 63 on the North Fork Skykomish River. This is the second time this culvert has blown out in the last 10 years. The USFS is going to leave it in this state for three years in an attempt to curb use on the Blanca Lake trail, now one of the most popular on all of the MBSNF.*

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## NCCC work day enhances Diablo Overlook

NCCC member Randy Payne and board members Marc Bardsley, Scott Crain, Phil Fenner, Tom Hammond and Ed Henderson spent a day in the North Cascades (in this case, the National Recreation Area of North Cascades National Park complex) doing restoration planting at Diablo Overlook. A shout-out to Stacy McDonough, North Cascades National Park Horticulturalist, for coordinating the event.

Celebrating 100 years of the National Park Service comes in many forms, and it was a pleasure to do some work for the landscape. The team also visited the Joe and Margaret Miller Greenhouse at the NPS offices in Marblemount—an informative experience to be sure.

The planting utilized native grasses (260 fescue grass) and shrubs (88 salal plants) to improve habitat at the natural area just beyond the Diablo Overlook parking lot. The plantings, especially the clumping fescue, will help reduce erosion and help stabilize the area directly above the steep



cliff overlooking Diablo Lake. The area planted also historically has had a high volume of non-native and invasive plants. This planting will help to reduce the populations of invasive plant species.



# Bikes in Wilderness areas?

by Rick McGuire

The conservation community has been startled, and alarmed, by a bill introduced by Utah Senators Orrin Hatch and Mike Lee to change the Wilderness Act and allow bikes into Wilderness areas.

Needless to say, NCCC strongly opposes opening up Wilderness areas to mechanized travel. This position is shared by nearly all organizations in the conservation community. Although motorcycles were considered much more of a threat when the Wilderness Act was passed in 1964, the Act's authors, including Washington's Senator at the time, Henry Jackson, specifically chose to exclude "mechanized" rather than "motorized" activity from Wilderness areas.

Wilderness areas were not established as hiking areas although that, along with animal packing, has been the only way to visit them. They were established for their own sake, and many of them have large portions where there are no trails at all, just Nature in its purest state. As John Saylor, the Republican Congressman from Pennsylvania who was the Wilderness Act's lead sponsor in the House of Representatives from 1956 until its passage in 1964 said:

*The stress and strain of our crowded, fast moving, highly mechanized and raucously noisy civilization create another great need for wilderness - a deep need for areas of solitude and quiet, for areas of wilderness where life has not yet given way to machinery.*



*Boots on the ground in the Wilderness.—PHIL FENNER PHOTO*

Those words ring even more true today than when they were first said many decades ago. No one is opposed to biking. Most conservationists probably own one or more, and most hikers also enjoy biking. But not in Wilderness areas, which have been set aside not for recreation but to remain as untouched and unmodified as possible.

Of Washington State's 42.6 million acres, about 11.7 million are owned and administered by the Federal government, mostly as National Forests, National Parks, Wildlife Refuges and a few other designations. Of that 11.7 million acres, about 4.5 million are designated Wilderness, an endowment of untouched Nature matched by few other places on Earth.

The other 7.2 million acres of Federal public lands are mostly open to biking. There are also more than 2 million acres of public lands owned and administered by Washington State, the vast majority of which are open to biking, along with many state and county parks. There has been and continues to be a concerted effort to build many more biking trails and routes. The I-90, Snoqualmie corridor east of Seattle has been a particular focus of such efforts, with millions of dollars spent and many miles of bike routes opened in recent years, and many more planned.

Relations between the hiking and conservation and mountain biking communities in Washington State have been quite good. The most recent Wilderness bill, the Pratt River additions to the Alpine Lakes Wilderness, was supported by all sides, with boundaries carefully drawn to exclude a trail along the Middle Fork Snoqualmie that is open to biking on an every-other-day basis.

Even some dedicated mountain bikers have questioned the motives of the two Utah Senators who have introduced this bill. They have been widely known as enemies of public lands. It requires no paranoia to wonder if their real motives are to start the process of watering down the Wilderness Act any way they can. First bikes, then motorcycles, and maybe drill-

ing rigs someday. This is one slope that really is slippery and leads down to who knows where?

There is no need to turn Wilderness areas into recreation areas. There are plenty of biking opportunities outside of Wilderness areas, and the list is growing. The tradition here in Washington state is one of cooperation, not confrontation, between various recreational interests. Most hikers are also bikers and most bikers are also hikers. Things are working well the way they now are. NCCC, and virtually the entire conservation community see no reason to begin chipping away at the Wilderness Act, and every reason not to. If it ain't broke, why fix it? The relations between various groups who recreate on public lands here in Washington state are not broken, and in no need of fixing, especially by going after the Wilderness Act.

*Here's another good op ed on mountain bikes and wilderness from the New York Times: [http://www.nytimes.com/2016/09/05/opinion/keep-bikes-off-our-wilderness-trails.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2016/09/05/opinion/keep-bikes-off-our-wilderness-trails.html?_r=0)*

## Resolution:

*North Cascades Conservation Council opposes changing the Wilderness Act in any manner, including to accommodate the use of mountain bikes (bicycles).*

## Explanation:

*While the NCCC supports nonmotorized recreation, and indeed, has some mountain bikers on its board, the Wilderness Act of 1964 is already full of compromises. Thus, any further concessions will erode the integrity and intent of the Wilderness Act.*

# Corvid's eye

In what passes for normal years nowadays, elusive as they've been of late, the southernmost headwaters basin of the Whitechuck River sustains a veritable Siberia well into late summer. Informed thru-hikers on the Pacific Crest Trail often time their passage over 6,450-foot Red Pass and into the upper Whitechuck, sights set on the distant Canadian border, as far into the season as feasible. To do otherwise is to voluntarily submit to a traverse of one of the North Cascades' notorious iceboxes for a couple or three miles, with few hints of the trail beneath one's feet. Although a generally reasonable course of travel for the prepared backcountry visitor, this lengthy slog across snow is less the preferred terrain of the thru-hiker, hence the frequent desire to delay it until the Cascade huckleberry has begun to redden, the Sitka mountain ash has commenced its transition to golden, and the king bolete has proceeded to reassert itself across the middle elevations of the mountain kingdom.

Here at the western base of the Dakobed Range, among the most remote of the lower 48; and with Dakobed (Glacier Peak) herself, the most deceptively shy of the major Cascade volcanoes looming just to the north, a valley of uncommon character and seeming mischief begins. The Whitechuck is oddly among the less-heralded valleys of the region, its still-undammed river somehow omitted from the 1978 designation of the Skagit Wild and Scenic River System, which nonetheless does include the other major, free-flowing tributaries downstream of the Skagit dams – among them the Sauk, Suiattle, and Cascade rivers. Until 2003 the fetid murk of Kennedy Hot Springs, located in the upper valley within a pit of bacterial glee, provided a measure of dubious fame for the Whitechuck, but great storms brought down landslides to bury the springs forevermore. The original trail heading upvalley and its road access were taken out, too, left to Ma Nature's subsequent whims. And so while not necessarily forgotten, the Whitechuck has measurably gained in relative obscurity across the years.

It is here that the corvid must beg the reader's forgiveness for his corruption and consolidation of the official and conventional spelling for the "White Chuck" River. The process of converting

the phonemes of old Chinook trade jargon place names into English encoding has long tended toward the awkward, and the Whitechuck is but a partial exception. The term "chuck" has typically referred to water and, given the milky appearance of this river during summer's dog days when glaciers high in the watershed are melting fast, there's admittedly a logic to separating the name into two words. Yet doing so is inconsistent with the single-term names of other, if you will, chunky rivers, like the Pilchuck and Skookumchuck. Given also that: 1) there is no one on record of European descent named Chuck who might've been an early explorer of the valley, 2) common pronunciation of "White Chuck" does not employ the customary pause between two words, and 3) the corvid's intrinsic contrariness, he will proceed with use of the Whitechuck colloquialism along with a few other persistent miscreants.

Where were we? Yes, dropping in elevation, trading Siberia and now-subterranean hot springs for the splendor of the river and its valley below, sporting what is among the finer forests of the Cascades' west slope. By the point where Pumice Creek hurries down from Glacier Peak's northwest flank, the Whitechuck and its feeder streams have cut gorges through geologically contemporary lahars, released by the volcano in recurrent cataclysmic events. Atop the broad benches that remain, high above the charging water and particularly in the vicinity of ever-be-guiling Camp Creek (practically unvisited by humans in its lower reaches), the deep conifer forest's development has been interrupted only by the elements since the conclusion of the last glacial period. Finally below 3,000 feet, we've traded the rocky crags and needles for an apex of shaded quiet, wherein the playful secrets



of the Cascades are at their most impervious to betrayal. With persistence, one may attain such a bench thereabouts, ideally in a light, cool rain. Once arrived, the unhurried and self-effacing may be allowed a glimpse of understanding into the graceful workings of the evergreen basilica.

Formerly, Forest Service road 23 along the north side of the Whitechuck ended as far as Owl Creek, about halfway up the main valley. Those bound for Kennedy Hot Springs or points beyond in the Glacier Peak Wilderness would disembark there. But following a series of storms last decade which damaged and closed 23 nearly all the way back to the Mountain Loop Byway, the Forest Service opted to permanently let go of its final 4.5 miles in exchange for reestablishing the motor vehicle link from the lower Whitechuck to the Suiattle River valley via Rat Trap Pass. Questionable as the need for the auto route over the pass may have been in this age of very limited maintenance dollars (indeed, the road over Rat Trap has already washed out again), the closure and decommissioning of the 23 road's final stretch has prompted a much-needed rewilding of the lower-middle Whitechuck valley. In just five years since the project's completion, the adjacent wild country has loosened its belt, allowing its benevolent belly of life to pour into the old road prism and reclaim it for its own purposes.

The corvid visited the decommissioned segment of erstwhile road 23, both shortly after the Forest Service's contractors had pulled their equipment out in 2011, and then again this past August. The desirable changes taking place in a mere half decade have been striking. Increasingly large trees have naturally fallen over the old road

CONTINUED ON PAGE 17



*In Memoriam*  
**Laura Zalesky**  
1924–2016

**L**aura Zalesky died May 18, 2016 in Everett, Washington. She met Philip Zalesky during World War II at a military facility in Tule Lake, California where Laura was a civilian employee and Phil served in the army. They married in January of 1945 and were totally devoted to each other for 68 years until Phil passed away in 2013. For most of those years the Zaleskys were passionate advocates for the environment and wilderness protection, especially within the Cascade and Olympic Mountain ranges.

Beginning in the 1950s they were active in several organizations including the Everett Mountaineers, North Cascades Conservation Council, Olympic Park Associates, and Pilchuck Audubon Society, often holding leadership positions. Laura also helped lead the fight to protect critical wetlands and headed up the Snohomish Wetlands Alliance which successfully sought the preservation of much of the Snohomish River Estuary. The website <http://www.historylink.org/File/9368> offers a much longer look at the life and work of the Zaleskys.

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*Phil and Laura at Cascade Pass in the late 1960s. — COURTESY ZALESKY FAMILY*

# Remembering Laura Zalesky

## Rick McGuire

2433 Del Campo Drive. Phil and Laura, Laura and Phil. It was like one word, a word that could be said either way in describing two unforgettable people who spent the majority of their lives working, and quite often succeeding, to protect the lands, forests, waters, birds and wildlife of Snohomish County.

The 2433 Del Campo Drive address is in the Eastmont area of south Everett, just east of Interstate 5 where it tops out onto a plateau after gaining 500 feet of elevation as it climbs south from downtown Everett. The best, least foothill-obstructed view of the Cascades from anywhere near Puget Sound can be seen from nearby high points, and some streets in Eastmont are named for those Cascade peaks and places familiar to Phil and Laura, such as Bedal, Whitechuck, Gothic, Monte Cristo, and of course, high Del Campo peak, whose dark form stands prominently above its neighbors in the Monte Cristo region.

At least during the 1970s, the woods behind Laura and Phil's house on Del Campo Drive stretched all the way down to the farmlands of the Snohomish valley below, and friends and I made the journey from their neighboring house several times before I knew the Zaleskys. Although I attended the high school where Phil taught, I did not know about his conservation efforts, else I would have made sure to take some classes from him. It wasn't until 1978 that I met Phil and Laura, when Marc Bardley, John Huskinson, Faye Ogilvy, Karen Fant, myself and Henry Kral, longtime conservation chair of the Everett Mountaineers, met with Laura and Phil in their living room and we all formed the Boulder River Protection Association, to keep intact what we called the last unlogged, virgin forested valley near Puget Sound.

It took a lot of time and effort, but we were ultimately successful in getting the Boulder River Wilderness enacted as part of the 1984 Washington Wilderness Act. I was less aware of how Laura and Phil's conservation activities extended into so many other spheres. That living room at 2433 Del Campo Drive, birdfeeders



*Laura, Mt. Baker snowshoe trip.*  
—COURTESY ZALESKY FAMILY

outside the windows, had been the launch site for many other efforts spanning Snohomish County from the mountains to the lowlands. It was for many years the nerve center for conservation efforts in Snohomish County, the majority of which enjoyed a large degree of success.

Laura and Phil were partners in the best sense of that term, supporting each other and working together nonstop to achieve the goals they both believed in. They were from the era when people got married and stayed married. But it wasn't only love for each other that kept them together and going, strong as that was. It was their shared determination to protect the places they both cared about. Together they formed a team that was far more than the sum of each of them as individuals. Snohomish County and the Cascades are very lucky that they chose it as their home, as are the rest of us. Phil and Laura are gone now, but not forgotten, and their legacy will live on. We will be lucky indeed if we ever see a team like Laura and Phil again.

## Tom Hammond

I remember fondly the times Laura and Phil invited me over for dinner to partake in Laura's famous "Mushroom Chicken"—a savory and yummy meal. The best part wasn't the food though, it was the company: Ken Wilcox, John Edwards and the Zaleskys would sit around the

table hatching new conservation ideas and plans, some pie in the sky, and others rooted in reality, such as the American Alps Legacy Project. How fun to see Laura get worked up—such a compact package of passion and awareness—a real dynamo in the conservation community. Laura: thanks for the mentoring and advising and friendship that makes this volunteer stuff worthwhile!

## Kris and Ken Wilcox

For us, to remember Laura is to remember the great union she shared with Phil. As we knew them, they were inseparable, and passionately dedicated to education and wilderness. And indeed their tireless work for Washington's wilderness has taught us all so much. They seemed to take pleasure in mentoring the next generation of conservationists.

Phil and Laura have been an important part of our own union; they were some of the first friends I made through Ken, and they were at our wedding in 2007.

When Ken was finishing the editing of *Wilderness Alps*, Phil gave him a stack of photos that included some of Phil and Laura's own early adventures in the North Cascades with other NCCC members. Some of those photos are in the book.

We're lucky to have known Phil and Laura. They're greatly missed.

## Karl Forsgaard

Laura Zalesky was a sweet lady. She and her husband Phil hosted NCCC board meetings in their Everett home, and were gracious hosts. As a couple they took many trips into the North Cascades, and they were passionate about protecting these lands. For many years Laura served as NCCC's membership chair, a labor-intensive job, and she was a steady presence on our board. In her later years she learned how to use a new computer program to manage the records, and then she passed this knowledge along to her successor, for the good of the organization.

# Gymnasium-sized water treatment plant latest phase of Holden Mine remediation

By Mary Koch



It takes just a few minutes to walk from the boundary of the Glacier Peak Wilderness, down the remote Railroad Creek Valley to bump into one of the largest construction projects underway in Washington State. Massive earth-moving and excavating equipment drown out all sounds of nature as the Holden Mine remediation effort grapples with water and soil pollution. It's the legacy of a huge copper mine that was abandoned nearly 60 years ago.

Costing a half-billion dollars and creating an immeasurable carbon footprint, the project is two years behind schedule. Rio Tinto—the international mining company paying for the cleanup—says “heavy construction” will be completed this year. Next year native vegetation will be planted on some 90 acres of tailings piles that have been scraped, reshaped and capped. For the coming three, four or more decades, Rio will operate an onsite, gymnasium-sized water treatment plant, powered by a 450-kilowatt diesel generator.

The plant will consume 200,000 gallons of diesel fuel a year along with 800 tons

of lime, says Tom Zimmer, Rio Tinto site project manager. Like the massive equipment and materials used throughout the project, all of it will be shipped up Lake Chelan via barge.

Rio Tinto may be required to proceed with “phase two”—more heavy construction—if the treatment plant isn't bringing water quality up to federal standards within three years. That's just one of the stipulations in a Record of Decision (ROD) issued jointly in 2012 by the Forest Service, federal Environmental Protection Agency and state Department of Ecology. The ROD suggests but does not require Rio Tinto to develop hydroelectric power instead of diesel as “highly desirable” for its ongoing operations at the site.

Dave Cline, Rio's project manager, said in an email interview that the company is studying the feasibility of building a hydro-electric plant. Even if hydro power is developed, insufficient water flow year-round would require at least some diesel-powered backup, he said.

“We must consider the cost implications, along with what the community wants

*The first structure Holden Village visitors now see is the 350-foot x 80-foot water treatment plant, located just east of the village entry. The four silos each hold 100 tons of lime, used to raise the pH level of the water, which is then filtered before reentering the creek. Sludge is transported to the top of the tailings piles and will be capped.*

and the best environmental practice,” said Cline.

Last year's Wolverine Creek Fire, which forced evacuation of the village, not only delayed remediation construction for a few weeks but continues to be a factor in studying hydro power production. In the 1980s, Holden Village—the nonprofit retreat center located in the former mining town—was granted a license to develop a power plant on Railroad Creek, east of the village. The village already had a plant to the west but struggles with limited power production in winter. Lacking financing, the proposed plant was never built. That

would be the likely spot for Rio to build, said Cline, but the area was “significantly burned and negatively affected” by the fire.

“Conditions have been unsafe for extended entry in this area, and Railroad Creek is also prone to log and debris flow,” he said. “Therefore, it is prudent to wait until the system re-equilibrates.”

The site’s remote location and logistical difficulties have made it “the most challenging” clean-up project Rio has ever faced, said Bill Adams, retiring general manager of the company’s Legacy and Closure division. The division handles more than a hundred mine closure sites worldwide.

“This old copper mine is the largest mine closure undertaken by Rio Tinto to date,” said Adams in the company’s newsletter. The initial cost estimate of \$100 million had ballooned to \$500 million as of spring 2016, and the end is not in sight.

Rio officials are quick to point out that their company never mined “one teaspoon” of dirt at Holden but got left holding the bag through a series of complex property acquisitions. The company—not taxpayers—is footing the entire bill, including the cost of Forest Service oversight. It is, say government officials, the largest project in the nation under USFS supervision.

Holden Village, located just across the tainted creek from the mine site, annu-

ally welcomed 4,000 to 5,000 guests until 2013, when remediation work began in earnest. During remediation, the retreat center rented out the majority of its buildings to Rio Tinto to house and feed construction workers. The usual flow of guests and volunteers was reduced to a trickle, yet the remediation era allowed for major upgrades of aging village infrastructure and facilities. Holden Village has announced plans to return to usual operations in 2017, pending Forest Service approval.

Guests at Holden Village must either hike in or, as most do, ride the ferry on Lake Chelan, getting off two-thirds up the lake at Lucerne. From there, the village provides transportation via school buses up the winding twelve-mile road to Holden. That trip will be significantly different for returning guests. First they’ll ride through the charred forest and then be greeted by the industrial-looking water treatment plant near the village entry. It’s a trade-off. What they will no longer see is the rusty hulking skeleton of the old mine mill that stood atop towering tailings piles. Rio Tinto knocked it down, burying the steel beams.

Howe Sound Mining Company operated the mine from 1938 to 1957, when it was abruptly closed due to plummeting copper prices. The mine produced some 212 million pounds of copper as well as lesser amounts of zinc, silver and gold from

57 miles of underground tunnels. The three enormous tailings piles – some 8.5 million tons – consist of the ground rock remaining after minerals with economic value were removed. After the mine was abandoned, mineral-laden water collected in the tunnels and seeped through the tailings to flow into Railroad Creek. The water is theoretically fit for human consumption but lethal to the tiny invertebrates that nourish fish.

The mining legacy has been a perennial headache. From 1989-91, the Forest Service took steps to reduce air pollution created by dust blowing off the massive tailings piles, orange-colored from oxidation. Twice—in 2003 and 2006—the Forest Service had to jump in and deal with emergency erosion repairs caused by flooding. In 1998, detailed studies of how to clean up the site began, ultimately leading to the Record of Decision fourteen years later.

Besides getting the tailings piles under control, the clean-up strategy included moving the creek bed away from the piles. That allowed space for a nearly mile-long underground barrier wall to prevent additional leaching of the metals. Rio Tinto engineers describe it as “the biggest wall you’ll never see.” A second underground wall downstream will be built if “phase 2” is required, depending on whether water quality meets the ROD standards.



*An excavator, so large it had to be transported to the mine site in pieces and reassembled, digs the trench for the underground barrier wall up to 80 feet deep, a project begun in 2014 and completed this year.*



# North Cascades Glacier Climate Project

Wednesday August 10 - Saturday August 13, 2016

by Tom Hammond

y trip reports can be quite long, so it is strange to be at a loss for words about how bad is the state of the Columbia Glacier and mid-elevation avalanche-fed glaciers across the North Cascades. Devastated and devastating...

*Surface streams carve deeply into the Columbia Glacier. —©TOM HAMMOND*

2016 marks the 33rd year of the NCGCP. The main team consisted of Professor Mauri Pelto, Director (Nichols College), Jill Pelto (University of Maine), Megan Pelto (currently resides in Chicago) and Andrew Hollyday (Middlebury College). I joined for only the Columbia Glacier, while the team had already visited the Easton, Rainbow and Sholes Glaciers on Kulshan (Mount Baker) and Lower Curtis Glacier on Mount Shuksan. On the Columbia, we were joined by Taryn Black (University of Washington). The team finished on Mount Daniel measuring the Ice Worm/Hyas Creek, Daniel and Lynch Glaciers.

The team has not had much good weather, but fortunately things turned for the Columbia, where we enjoyed warm, sunny weather—Seattle recorded an official high of 90°F on Friday the 12th. It seems that every time we're on the Columbia, some heat record is set. Things cleared off literally just after we did the ascent to Virgin Pass Wednesday evening. At dark, just as we crawled in our sleeping bags beat from the approach, two high school guys asked us if we “could call the park ranger to rescue” them because one of them was cramping and they didn't have water and it was dark. Umm, no park, no cell service, and not much reward for such lack of awareness. Mauri and Taryn gave them some water and a flashlight and sent them down the trail. More on that later. While the NCCC and I want to get more youth involved with the outdoors and aware of the North Cascades, it comes at perhaps too steep a price. Today's crop of hikers seem to lack a Wilderness ethic. There is no awareness of Leave No Trace, and in fact many treat the backcountry with little regard for preserving the natural state. We chatted with a USFS trail crew (yes, they still work on trails)—suffice it to say they take a dim view of the influx—people doing bad things to the Wilderness like deliberately removing woody debris from restoration areas and trampling right over the “revegetation zone” signs to well, trample fragile meadows and the like.

Thursday dawned bright and warm, and a lovely camp was established below

the Columbia Glacier amid wildflowers and blueberries. Within a five-meter radius around my tent, I had literally more perfect, ripe, delicious blueberries than I could eat in the three full days and nights we were there. One troubling aspect of the outwash area we've traditionally camped: there is alder growing all over the place. Where just a few years ago were boulders, sand, wildflowers and blueberries on a glacier outwash plain with some trees/vegetation; now there are thickets of alder, and it is getting worse fast. While there were mosquitoes and a couple deer flies, they weren't too bad, though a few got me good while I slept/laid half outside the tent to watch the Perseid meteor shower both Thursday and Friday nights. Heck, it was so nice that Andrew elected to sleep with no tent both nights. The Perseids were great! From 10 to midnight, there were several horizon-to-horizon (generally NE to W) brilliant meteors, complete with lasting trails of incandescent plasma. Then from midnight to sunrise, the radiant was more overhead, and the meteors were literally zipping every which way, sometimes as many as three in a single second! Wow! I'd doze off, and then wake an hour later, only to see dozens more in the few minutes I was awake. The scene was completed with the Milky Way providing a glorious backdrop—even the Double Cluster and M31 (Andromeda Galaxy) were clearly visible to the naked eye. Nights of wonder to be sure!

## A troubling and unprecedented scene

Okay, I've danced around it long enough. The Columbia Glacier is disintegrating at an alarming rate. The impact and significance of 2015 cannot be understated, and 2016 won't be much better. The entire surface of the glacier save for the highest, steepest avalanche fans, is riven with running water—supra glacial streams flow across exposed blue ice in what would traditionally be called the accumulation zone—an area usually covered by three meters of snow. These streams

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exploit any and every depression in the glacier, creating moulins and carving deep trenches even at mid-glacier and above. Let me repeat: features normally seen at the terminus are everywhere on the glacier—there is no accumulation zone, only running water and melting ice. A troubling scene unprecedented in my 35 years of mountain experiences.

The terminus is guarded on the west side by a massive ice-cored moraine—gigantic boulders constantly rumbling and smashing, slagging their way down to the new lake that has formed where only a decade ago was a 70-foot high convex snout of blue ice. Indeed, as we approached the glacier, Jill asked that we round the ridge together so that she could see my reaction to my first view of the glacier since I last visited in 2013. It is hard to come to grips with, much less describe what it's like to watch, one of the most precious resources we have disappear right before our very eyes. As the pictures attest, not only the linear recession of the glacier, but more importantly the thinning of the glacier

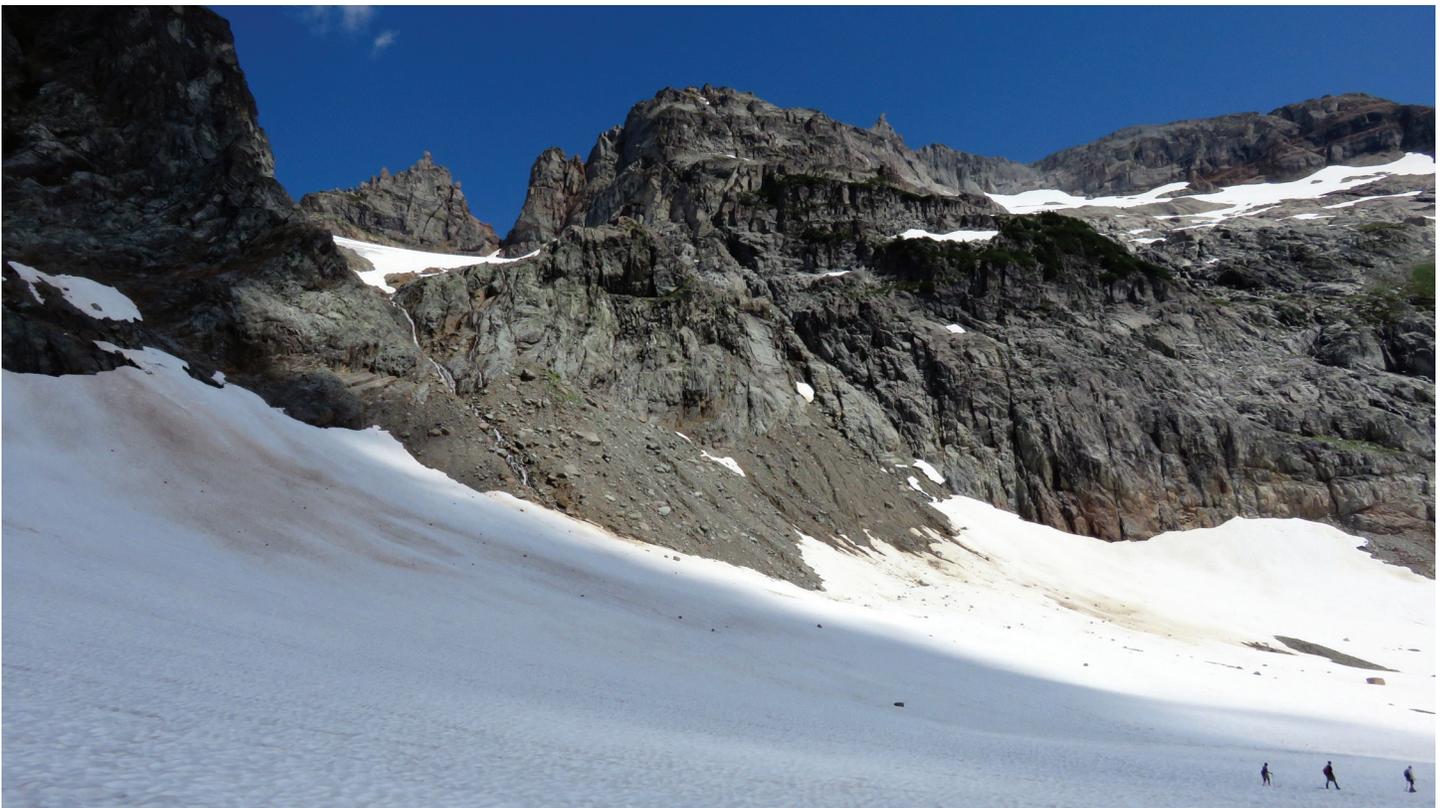
make for a desperate forecast for future water users in the entirety of the Skykomish/Snohomish River system. And not the distant future, but an immediate future. In your children's lifetime the glacier will cease to exist but for some avalanche fans below the sheer ramparts of mighty Columbia Peak. A decade ago, Mauri and I debated how long the Columbia would exist. I went with about 100 years given an ablation rate of a meter per year. Mauri went with 100-200 years given the same. Now we're both thinking 50-70 years. Whoa...

It is apparent the glaciers won't recover from 2015. Much like the flowing water exploits every crevice on the glaciers, 2015 is an event in the past that carries to the future. I mentioned to Mauri that it would take five to 10 years of record snowfall during each winter, and cool wet summers to come close to making up for what we were witnessing. His gaze narrowed as he regarded me. "Yeah, that's certain to happen given the trend of the past 30 years, especially recently."

Don't think it's all doom and gloom. The Columbia Glacier is situated in the Monte

Cristo range—a tight collection of incredibly craggy, jagged peaks. It lies in a massive cirque bounded by Columbia Peak on the west, Monte Cristo Peak on the north and Kyes Peak on the east—a series of serrate, multi-hued ridges chain the peaks together, spectacular scenery high and low, near and far. The waterfalls are incredible: dozens cascade off the surrounding cliffs, a full symphony of sound and energy that adds to an already exceptional experience. Jill confirmed with me that the sky is more blue than she's seen in her worldly travels. It was so fun to witness Andrew experiencing the North Cascades for the first time (they had a couple clear days on the south side of Kulshan, but the heart of the Monte Cristos is a whole different deal altogether—very stimulating). He is already planning to apply to the UW!

We saw a couple of goats from Monte Cristo pass on the hanging glacier below Wilman Spires. A decade ago one could easily step onto this glacier from closely below Monte Cristo pass. Now it is thinned and pulled away from the ridge—requiring a descent on a near vertical slope to



*NCGCP team near the top of the Columbia Glacier, the crags of Kyes Peak above. —©TOM HAMMOND*

get onto equally steep ice. Hmm. It was good to watch and encourage Megan as she learns safe travel in the alpine. Indeed, full marks to everyone on the team—very intelligent, motivated, curious people all, and a real honor to share time and space with every single one of them. Other wildlife included some hummingbirds, juncos, a few marmots and picas. Marmot and pica numbers are way down, though the team reports they saw many on Rainbow.

As we departed the glacier for the last time Friday afternoon, we discovered our route over the outlet stream and around the lake was under water—some icebergs were restricting the flow of the outlet stream. We doffed our boots to ford the stream—now that was cold. Later at camp, Mauri and I marveled that the rocks re-radiated so much heat long after the sun was down.

We were up early Saturday morning to beat the sun over the ridge—no fun hiking up and out of the lake basin—nearly 1,000 feet of vertical in total, under a hot sun. Just after we had forded the outlet river a (the only) Wilderness ranger (a young woman named Jess) approached us and aggressively accused us of illegally camping at the lake shore while she reached for her ticket book. I calmly explained we had just come from a very legal camp at the base of the glacier, where we had been for several days doing scientific research. After a few cold minutes, she realized we weren't part of the ethos-challenged hordes, and

were legit. She quickly apologized and went on to explain she was so tired of the disrespectful masses, and had even had to do a SAR (search and rescue) just the past Wednesday night/Thursday morning. Oh no...

Yep, those same high school boys didn't hike out as we had instructed them, but instead hiked to who knows where on the trail and spent the night. Keep in mind that it is all downhill, pretty straight forward, and takes only a couple hours to hike down.

We shared a laugh with Jess, then I mentioned the NCCC. How would it have appeared to have the president of such an august organization ticketed for illegal camping! LOL!! The USFS is not repairing the road to the Blanca Lake trailhead in part to discourage people from hiking the area, such is the over-use/abuse. Apparently it's not working, because we

saw 140 humans and 10 dogs on the way in as we hiked out. Only a handful were going to spend the night, and some didn't even have water on that 89°F day. Apparently social media/internet is driving this influx of people. Now to get them observing a leave no trace ethic...

### Final science summary

The mass balances observed fit the pattern of a warm but wet winter. The high freezing levels left the lowest-elevation glaciers Lower Curtis and Columbia Glacier with the most negative mass balance

of approximately 1.5 meters. The other six glaciers had negative balances of -0.6—1.2 meters. This following on the losses of the last three years has left the glaciers with a net thinning of 6 meters.

The team measured terminus change at several glaciers and found that a combination of the 2015 record mass balance loss and early loss of snowcover from glacier snouts in 2016 led to considerable retreat since August 2015. The retreat was 25 meters on Easton Glacier, 20 meters on Columbia Glacier, 20 meters on Daniels Glacier; Sholes Glacier 28 meters, Rainbow Glacier 15 meters, Lower Curtis Glacier 15 meters. The main change at Lower Curtis Glacier was the vertical thinning, in 2014 the terminus was 41 meters high, in 2016 the terminus seracs were 27 meters high. The terminus thinned by about the height of a five-story building in two years!

I am so very thankful to Mauri Pelto for inviting me to join in and participate with the NCGCP. I have so much respect and admiration for him, Jill and Megan. The bonds of friendship are real and meaningful and I am blessed indeed to have people such as this in my life. I am also thankful for my curiosity, and the ability and desire to explore our planet.

*Find the full official 2016 report of the North Cascades Glacier Climate Project at <http://www.nichols.edu/departments/glacier/>*

## Corvid's Eye

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prism, discouraging use by bikes. And in keeping with the moist, lower elevation attributes of this part of the Whitechuck valley, young alder, red cedar, and western hemlock are rapidly volunteering along the scarified road's surface. Where culverts have been removed, newly daylighted streams draining from Meadow Mountain's long ridge now have clear sailing to the river, their busy procession no longer hindered by the road. In many spots, gigantic old trees still flank this corridor, acting as fecund parents for the generation of new saplings growing where internal combus-

tion engines once roared. What remains is expanded, cool season habitat for Cascade critters large and small, terrestrial and aquatic, which will only improve with the ensuing years.

Mostly out of mind to casual visitors these days and receiving few of the accolades showered upon its sister valleys, the Whitechuck between Pugh Creek and Kennedy Creek, amounting to roughly ten river miles, continues its hushed-but-profound business of unhindered natural trajectories. All appears increasingly well at these low and middle elevations; while everyday folk may still reach the uppermost Whitechuck by way of the Pacific Crest Trail and its lowermost reaches along what remains of road 23. The valley as a whole

is now wilder and more intact than at any time since a road was first pushed up it, regrettably to some, in the mid-twentieth century. The lesson here is an easy one, in that the North Cascades remain at such a robust level of health in the heart of the range that healing injuries on its flank is just a matter of allowing room to do so; though avoiding injury in the first place, even when inconvenient, remains the obvious priority. Whether impetus be for recreation or extraction, an enlightened society will ensure that the wellbeing of the Cascades' forests and waters comes first, no matter the magnitude of the issue at hand. The Whitechuck hints, if subtly, at such a better future.



## North Cascades National Park bill: Last chance

By Brock Evans

*NCCC member and former board member Brock Evans has been documenting his life in conservation in a series of personal essays. Here he looks back on the tense day that led to the signing of legislation in 1968 that created North Cascades National Park.*

### July 1968, Washington D.C.

Gotta get some sleep, lots of work to do the next few days. I am here at a crucial moment in the history of the most important campaign in the Pacific Northwest at that time. Our long struggle to protect those “Wilderness Alps” of the North Cascade Mountains in my state had reached a climax, and a point of no return. My task: to shepherd the pending North Cascades National Park legislation through its final stages in the Congress. Which in this case meant the House of Representatives.

A big assignment, and I had a fitful sleep that hot night, anxious about what was to come, and about my responsibilities to get things done and make things happen—without knowing really what to do. Back into the unknown, I thought; how do I do these things, how to even try? But

the stakes were huge, so I’ll just have to set out.

First things first. The North Cascades bill, to establish the new proposed 700,000 acre National Park (and accompanying Recreation Areas), and to create two new large Wilderness Areas (Glacier Peak and Pasayten, 1 million acres more) had handily passed the Senate months earlier. Not all we wanted, but pretty darn good... making safe forever many of the places whose fate at the hands of the Forest Service logging machine we had feared for... wild and beautiful places I had personally explored, hiked and climbed in, loved.

Our side had two friendly Congressmen from Washington State—park supporters—sitting on the House Interior Committee itself. Yeah, they were junior—Lloyd Meeds from Everett, and Tom Foley from

Spokane. (Foley would become Speaker of the House many years later). There were some opponents remaining, sure; some state and outside Republican politicians; but these had not been very vocal—nowhere as near as much as when they opposed the proposed Redwoods National Park a month ago, I remembered.

But even if they testified against, the fact that our SUPPORTERS were actually on the committee and could vote and speak up for the bill... that should make a huge difference. And yes, Wayne Aspinall, Democrat from a rural mining-and-grazing, a dam-building and wilderness-hating

*The view from Diablo overlook as a shower obscures Colonial Peak, North Cascades National Park complex.*

—©TOM HAMMOND

district of Western Colorado, was the Committee Chair. No friend—in fact the opposite. The Darth Vader of those times as far as conservation was concerned, this was the man who singlehandedly held up passage of the Wilderness Act for at least one, maybe two, Congressional sessions... and finally, when the political momentum for the bill was too great, extracted his pound of flesh before he let it go to the Floor (where incidentally it DID pass overwhelmingly, only 1 dissenting vote, four years before), forcing bill supporters to accept his two “compromises”: to allow mining claims to be staked out in any and all Wildernesses for the next twenty years; and to allow grazing by livestock, no mat-

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*“Call the governor’s office,” I said; “even if you don’t get through, be’ll know we’re watching and maybe we can repair the damage later.”*

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ter how destructive, to continue in the wild mountain meadows, forever.

Yep, this man isn’t any kind of friend, I thought. And remember how, all through that round of three field hearings just a few months ago—the ones where we vastly outnumbered park opponents?—remember how mad he got at seeing all those green armbands, and how he tried to overcome our display by scheduling that extra quickie add-on hearing in park-hostile Wenatchee, including a never-before imposed requirement that no one who had testified before (meaning us) could also testify there? Yeah, but I went over there anyway, at the last minute, and, organizing desperately with Wenatchee veteran Bill Asplund, scraped up enough new pro-park witnesses, including local high school kids, that we outnumbered him even there, I remembered. THAT really pissed him off!

I walked into Congressman Lloyd Meeds office about 9 am. “Hi Lloyd,” I greeted him happily. “This ought to be a great day,” I opined. Meeds, a smallish taciturn man, former prosecutor from his home county (Snohomish) rarely smiled much anyway, so his perfunctory greeting didn’t surprise.



But something was wrong—he was frowning. “It’s all over, Brock. I’ve just learned that Representative Catharine May is going to testify in the name of governor Dan Evans, and she’s going to say he opposes the bill (meaning thus that officially the whole State of Washington opposes—a very bad thing).

Congresswoman May was a popular, long-serving and very conservative Republican from Washington’s east side—a very conservative region. She had always been very vociferous and very public in her opposition to any kind of better protections for the North Cascades, park or otherwise.

My heart sank like a stone. This is very bad—it’s all the excuse Aspinall needs to kill the Park bill, and he’s been looking hard for one. If he can say that the State opposes the bill, then he’ll just say we’ll have to postpone any action until the state and its congressional delegation work it all out. True enough—land-protection bills don’t usually pass until such things are worked out—which is why we environmentalists always have to work so hard—always got to get every key politician either persuaded or at least neutral... before we can do anything. “Industry doesn’t have to do that, jump through all those hoops in order to get a bill passed that they want,” I thought bitterly to myself. But WE do; yet that constant all-out effort, required of us all the time and each and every time... hard and foot slogging as it is, endless-seeming too... that, I have always believed, is what has made us successful almost all the time, too.

*This photograph shows former NCCC President Pat Goldsworthy (left) the moment after US President Lyndon Johnson signed the Act creating the North Cascades National Park Complex in 1968, an effort that was guided by all NCCC members.*

Besides, this latest bombshell, the message the Congresswoman was going to deliver today—that the State of Washington opposed Senator Jackson’s Senate bill (The bill being considered for markup)—wasn’t even true!

I knew the real situation was the exact opposite because Governor Dan Evans, a moderate Republican and strong conservationist in his own right, had told me so just a week before.

It was at a reception in the Governor’s mansion in Olympia, and he and I were comparing notes on our respective climbs of Mt. Olympus (I having just made my first ascent the weekend before). I had casually mentioned my coming trip to Washington DC, and expressed the hope that he had changed his position (which had been opposed to this bill)—and he assured me that he had done so, and would so testify publicly if asked.

Governor Evans had recently pulled off an important coup, by maneuvering his party into adopting a competing National Park proposal as the one they would ac-

cept. Of course this proposal was a big disappointment to us—the boundaries were only half the size of the Senate Bill. But tactically and strategically, this was a brilliant move on the part of Governor Evans.

Evans' position was a very astute pro-park gambit nevertheless, because through it, he had maneuvered his own party into supporting A PARK OF SOME KIND. No, not the boundaries we wanted, but also no longer opposed to any Park under any circumstances—that was the key. And it was the Governor's publicly stated position that had enabled strong conservationist and large-Park supporter Mo Udall (D-AZ) to say to Evans at that Seattle hearing, "well now everyone from state officialdom is on record as supporting a Park. So now the only question is, what are to be the boundaries?" This was a terribly important political fact for our side... because what we were really all about in this long and difficult campaign was not only to create a new park—a designation much more protective than anything the Forest Service would do... but also, perhaps even more in the long run, it was very important to any future wilderness campaigns in the state that we prove to a skeptical local political establishment that we **COULD** do it, that we **DID** have the political clout—now, to actually take land away from a powerful federal agency whose pro-logging policies had heretofore dominated state politics.

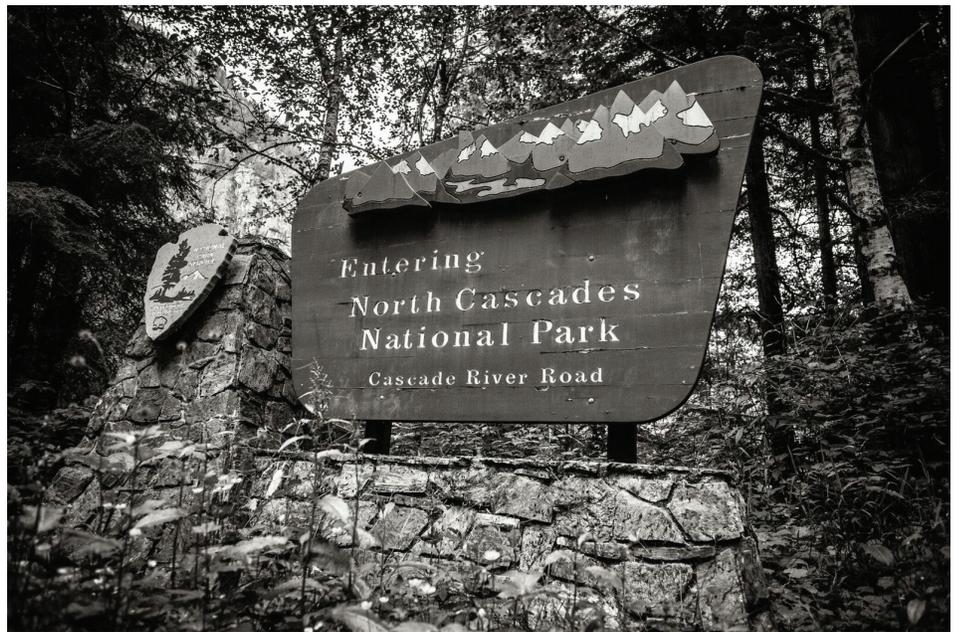
That feat hadn't occurred in over thirty years I knew, the last time being when we established Olympic National Park in 1938. I wondered if we could do it again.

Didn't look like it at 9 o'clock that that morning in Lloyd Meeds office. But it isn't true that Governor Evans won't support our Park, I told him, recounting what the Governor had said to me personally.

"Well, you better get him to tell that to Rep. May," Meeds said, "because she's saying she's going to say the state's original Park proposal is still the position... and that will kill the bill for this session of Congress."

So now what were we going to do to overcome this blatant falsehood that the Chair of the Committee so much wanted to hear?

It was now near ten o'clock—7 am West Coast time. No one there at the Governor's office yet, and who knows where he is anyhow, and how can I possibly get through to him directly? He's a friend but has so many gatekeepers... what to do, the hearing is just three hours away, at 1 PM... and then it's all over.



What, who? Jim Dolliver, I thought. Jim was the Governor's right hand man in all his dealings with us about this issue. A tall, friendly, strongly built man, also an attorney from Everett, he was always supportive of the largest possible park, and was instrumental in the maneuverings which had produced that Republican 'substitute', thus opening the door for political movement in a positive direction.

But where was he? Maybe at home? I dialed Information in Everett (this was the era of rotary phones remember), got his number—still listed publicly, in those more innocent times... called his home. His wife said, oh sorry he's in San Francisco today, won't be back till tomorrow."

San Francisco – Jesus! Where I asked? "Oh in some courtroom, arguing a case... I'll look it up, sorry can't find it..."

Now what? No phones open at the San Francisco Courthouse yet either. I surmised that it had to be a federal court—district or appellate—but couldn't even call there till probably 8 or 8:30 Pacific Coast Time.

What to do, gotta save this thing! I started calling our leaders in Washington State, all of whom were friendly with both the Governor and Dolliver too... Pat Goldsworthy, Polly Dyer, Emily Haig, a registered Republican... tell them what's up. Great savvy and enthusiasm there, and soon enough the networks were buzzing back in the northwest. "Call the governor's office," I said; "even if you don't get through, he'll know we're watching and maybe we can repair the damage later."

—THOM SCHROEDER PHOTO

The clock was ticking, almost as loud as my heart now. Fingertips were ice, as they always get when I am anxious... back to the phones. I try San Francisco Federal District Court: no record of any Jim Dolliver there as attorney on any case.

Tried the appellate court clerk: better luck; "yes, he's on the case of \_\_\_ vs \_\_\_, it starts soon... would you like the number of that courtroom?"

Yes! Got it, made the call... Dolliver not there yet. Time running — now nearly noon East Coast time... the hearing at 1 PM, hurry, hurry.

I gave the clerk the telephone number of the pay phone beside me, then just sat down in the telephone booth, waiting. This particular booth was one of a bank of them just off the great green-marbled lobby at the front of the Longworth Building; the hearing would be upstairs. Every time another lobbyist came by to use one of the other phones—this was a very busy set of telephones—I would pretend to be reading a directory prior to calling someone. I couldn't actually pick up the phone though, because what if Jim called me then? One chance to get to him, just one chance... and time is running out, faster and faster...

Then, almost miraculously it seemed to me, this being such an improbable long shot – my phone DID ring. Dolliver. I blurted out hastily "Jim, Aspinall is holding the North Cascades markup today, and Catherine May is going to testify that

the state won't change its position, and that will give Aspinall all he needs to shut things down for the year..."

Dolliver says that's not our position now—we're for the park... maybe Catharine doesn't know it yet. I'll call her..." "... wouldn't it be even better if the Governor called her?" I suggested, carefully.

Yes was the answer; "I'll see if I can reach the Governor first, then Catharine..." 12:20 now... all there was left to do was wait, heart in my mouth. No lunch — I couldn't be less hungry. What I did instead was make some visits to a few other offices of known friends, like Mo Udall especially, to warn them of what was up, and what I had done to counter. "We're trying to reach the Governor, and I want you to know that he told me directly just one week ago that he HAD changed his position..."

About 10 minutes to 1, I walked anxiously up to that old oak-paneled hearing room, Room 1424, Longworth—already the scene of several of a few other recent battles, and to be the scene of many more dramatic moments in my career over the next 25 years...

Already the Congresspeople were filing in too, filling up about half of the two-tiered curving rows of seats. I saw Lloyd Meeds and whispered to him just before things started what I'd been doing. He forced a wry smile, said he hoped it could do some good, because he had just talked to Catherine and she still had the same position.

My heart sank again—that meant that no one HAD called her! OmiGod...

Congresswoman May came in, a pleasant rather ordinary-looking woman in her fifties... smiling as she greeted many people (but not me) on her way to a front row seat. Still the same! All is probably lost this time, I thought sadly...now what? It appeared that she was going to be the only witness too. It occurred to me that this is a setup—to kill the park bill.

Just before the hearing started one of her aides came up the aisle and whispered briefly in her ear. I couldn't make it out; didn't take long anyway.

She nodded, then Aspinall came in, a slight and smallish man, gray-haired veteran of these political maneuvers, self-assured, strolling about to chat with various Committee Members as if he was in total

command (as he in fact was!)

Aspinall gavelled the hearing to open, announced the agenda for the day, North Cascades first. Then called upon Representative May, "to present the position of Governor Evans and the State of Washington..."

My heart sank further; she still had the same smiling expression; we all knew of her extreme conservative credentials and her long vociferous public opposition to the bill ... why was she the anointed one now, here to do us in? Industry must have colluded in advance with her and Aspinall to set this one up, I thought.

She testified, clearly just reading from a prepared statement—written by an aide, probably under the direction of Aspinall's Chief Committee Counsel I guessed; maybe even with the help of some industry lobbyist — that's how these things are often done.

She didn't testify long, but long enough to say the words: "The governor does not support the Senate version of the park bill you are considering today; he still supports the Republican proposal, presented to you last spring..."

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*Every time another lobbyist came by to use one of the other phones, I would pretend to be reading a directory prior to calling someone.*

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There they were, the fatal words: doom, death for all we had dreamed of and worked so hard for all these past 11 years... gone.

Aspinall beamed, and started to say something like, well I guess that's it for now — but just then Mo Udall raised his hand, to be recognized: "Mr. Chairman, may I ask the witness a question?"

"Yes, go ahead."

"Congresswoman May, you testified that the state's position was the same as it was last spring... but have you heard any new comments from the Governor about this matter recently?"

Rep. May, still smiling, doesn't miss a beat. "Well, yes, Congressman. Thanks for reminding me. My aide just now told me that I had a call from the Governor a few minutes ago, saying that he now supported the Senate version of the bill..."

"Thank you, Representative May, and thank you, Mr. Chairman... that's all the questions I have, and I yield back the remainder of my time."

A now-crestfallen Aspinall gavelled the meeting to a close; our beloved mountains and streams and forests were safe again, now well on their way—before three more months would pass—to permanent protection, safe forever.

April 23, 1968

Governor Daniel J. Evans  
State Capitol  
Olympia, WA 98501

Dear Dan:

This is just a note to tell you how much I and many others of us appreciated your testimony at the North Cascades hearing last Friday. You were there when it counted; you spoke up when you could not have appeared without much trouble; and you spoke your soul and it was most important of all that you do so. Other aspirants to public office who claim to care about these issues were conspicuous by their absence. Conservation owes you a great debt and we will not forget it.

Best Regards,

Brock Evans

jc

# The south side of Koma Kulshan

by Phil Fenner

The south side of Koma Kulshan (aka Mt. Baker) had been a puzzle to me for years. I had a vague memory of hiking up to Schreiber's Meadow and beyond back in the 1970s before the National Recreation Area (NRA) arrived as part of the Mt. Baker Wilderness package in the late 1980s. But I'd steered clear of it once I'd heard the NRA was established specifically to allow snowmobiles. I'm fascinated by the view of Baker from the Skagit Valley, and I'd been looking for a west-side approach trail to the area, so this summer I lobbied my brother and son to go up that way and basecamp in Mazama Park, then day-hike around Park Butte, Railroad Grade, and adjacent areas.

The first surprise came at the trailhead, where the view looking straight up the Middle Fork toward the Deming Glacier and the Black Buttes was stunning! The big trees began right after the somewhat dicey river crossing—a single, skinny log with a rope handrail, propped up on big boulders over the raging Nooksack eight feet below. I suspect it filters out hikers, so this trail will never be heavily used. We saw only a couple of other people until we reached Mazama Park. It's steep and a bit narrow, but Ridley Creek trail gets you there directly and the Alaska Yellow Cedar forest it traverses is majestic.

At Mazama Park we were absolutely amazed by the views in all directions. Baker and the Black Buttes loomed huge to the north, the cliffs of Park Butte were directly above us and just to the southwest the Twin Sisters range was in full glory! The meadow sloped gently down and has numerous campsites widely spaced. To our astonishment, a covered kitchen area was set up next to the shelter, where a WTA "Volunteer Vacation" trail crew hovered! Luckily one campsite was still open. The water source was almost dried up—a proviso for late summer hikers!—but a few clear puddles in the creek bed below the camp area on the Bell Pass Trail stayed full that week.

Entering Mazama Park, we passed a Wilderness sign facing the OTHER way. Interestingly, there's no NRA sign to explain what you enter as you leave Wilderness. And then it struck me—the NRA was designated for snowmobiles (which, being mechanized, are prohibited in Wilderness), but looking at the topography,

there's absolutely no way a snowmobile, coming up from the eastern side of the area via Schreiber's Meadow, could ever reach Mazama Park. The trail climbs a huge talus slope with several switchbacks from Mazama Park to the ridgeline that connects Park Butte to Baker via Cathedral Crag—a sensible place to draw the line between Wilderness and NRA. My conclusion is that a series of deals made at the time meant the western border of the NRA was probably drawn to include the open slopes above treeline all the way to the lip of the canyon above the Deming Glacier, down to Mazama Lake. So below that, they took a ruler and connected the border of the NRA to Park Butte, thereby "capturing" Mazama Park within the NRA, even though Mazama Park itself isn't accessible to the snow machine crowd.

Visiting the old lookout on Park Butte, we saw the biggest crowds. Then we explored up over the old Baker Pass Trail to touch the Easton Glacier at the top of Railroad Grade where the climbers were camped. Next day we hiked out the lonely, quiet Bell Pass Trail as the weather cooled and some clouds came in, and finally we made it to Mazama Lake on our last full day. On the Baker Pass we crossed what looked like a brand-new trail, not marked on any map and with no sign. The WTA crew told us if we followed that "new" trail west, it would take us above treeline and over to Mazama Lake. We tried, and it worked! I can only guess that this trail was like the "Scott Paul Trail" across the Sulfur Moraine, built during a burst of trail building during the tenure of Ranger Scott Paul, who died suddenly. It was built across the "easy" parts, then would disappear through the gullies and appear again, clearly having been only the beginning of a project that was never finished.

Several deep gullies had to be crossed and steep heather slopes traversed beyond the end of that abandoned trail, but it was still dry that morning so it wasn't too challenging. Because the trail was never completed, the meadows around Mazama Lake are gloriously pristine! I almost hesitate to write about them, and I hope nobody ever puts this route in an official guidebook, or, well, we all know the likely outcome. Just beyond Mazama Lake there's a route that will take you up just north of Meadow Point to the lip of the immense canyon left behind by the Dem-

ing Glacier as it receded after the Pleistocene glacial advance, where you can see the snout of the Deming and its dramatic icefall as it tumbles around the base of the Black Buttes. As the rain started we made haste directly downslope toward the main trail, following what we were sure must be a fisherman's path, but the forest got more and more dense and when we finally reached the trail we were exhausted and drenched after a classic wet Cascades bushwhack. Another mile back up the trail to Mazama Park, we sat in the shelter for dinner, cold and damp but out of the rain. Next morning the sun returned and we were able to dry everything out before we headed out.

The WTA trail team had a bunch of extra food (carried in by horse) and fewer volunteers than expected, so they offered us all the food we could eat. Prepared to live off freeze-dried dinners and gorp, we were eating huge Dagwood sandwiches, salmon and penne, even pickles! It was a bit of a guilty pleasure, but we were ecstatic and thankful.

And although we didn't take a look at Schreiber's Meadow, where I've heard there's something of a snowmobile junkyard developing, we didn't see any evidence of mechanical abuse in the areas we saw. The crowds weren't even bad on an August weekend. So as much as I'd love to "claw back" Mazama Park into Wilderness, it seems to have defaulted to that anyway, thanks to the topography!

## Larsen mine puts roadless area west of Twin Sisters at risk

To the southwest of Koma Kulshan stands a range of high, sharp, scenic peaks dotted with small glaciers called the Twin Sisters, easily seen from the Skagit Valley in front of the big volcano. It's geologically unique, being one of the largest exposures of a rare rock type derived from the upper mantle. It came from perhaps as far as 75 miles below the surface, and stands as testimony to the intense tectonic jumble that built the North Cascades, what geologist and NCCC member Rowland Tabor calls a "Mountain Mosaic."

Its scenic beauty was in full glory during my trip, but...there's a hitch! The Twin Sisters is composed mostly of Dunite, a very hard and erosion-resistant rock, rich in the mineral olivine. That hardness

makes it stand up in scenic pinnacles, but the olivine and its associated minerals makes it a target for mining. A magnesite mine known as the Swen Larsen Quarry located northwest of Twin Sisters is in an area that could have qualified for Wilderness, but the western boundary of the Mt. Baker Wilderness is at the very crest of the Twin Sisters range, so only its eastern slope is protected against mining. So although it's technically legal where it is, if the miners are allowed to expand this mine they will be encroaching on an Inventoried Roadless Area, which is all we have left of unprotected Federal ancient forest that could qualify for future Wilderness protection.

Read more about this mining threat on our blog and in upcoming issues of *The Wild Cascades*.



Twin Sisters range from Mazama Park. —PHIL FENNER PHOTO



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*In honor of Betty Manning, who as editor of The Wild Cascades was always asking for more flower photos. Columbia Glacier outwash plain, August 12, 2016. —©TOM HAMMOND PHOTO*