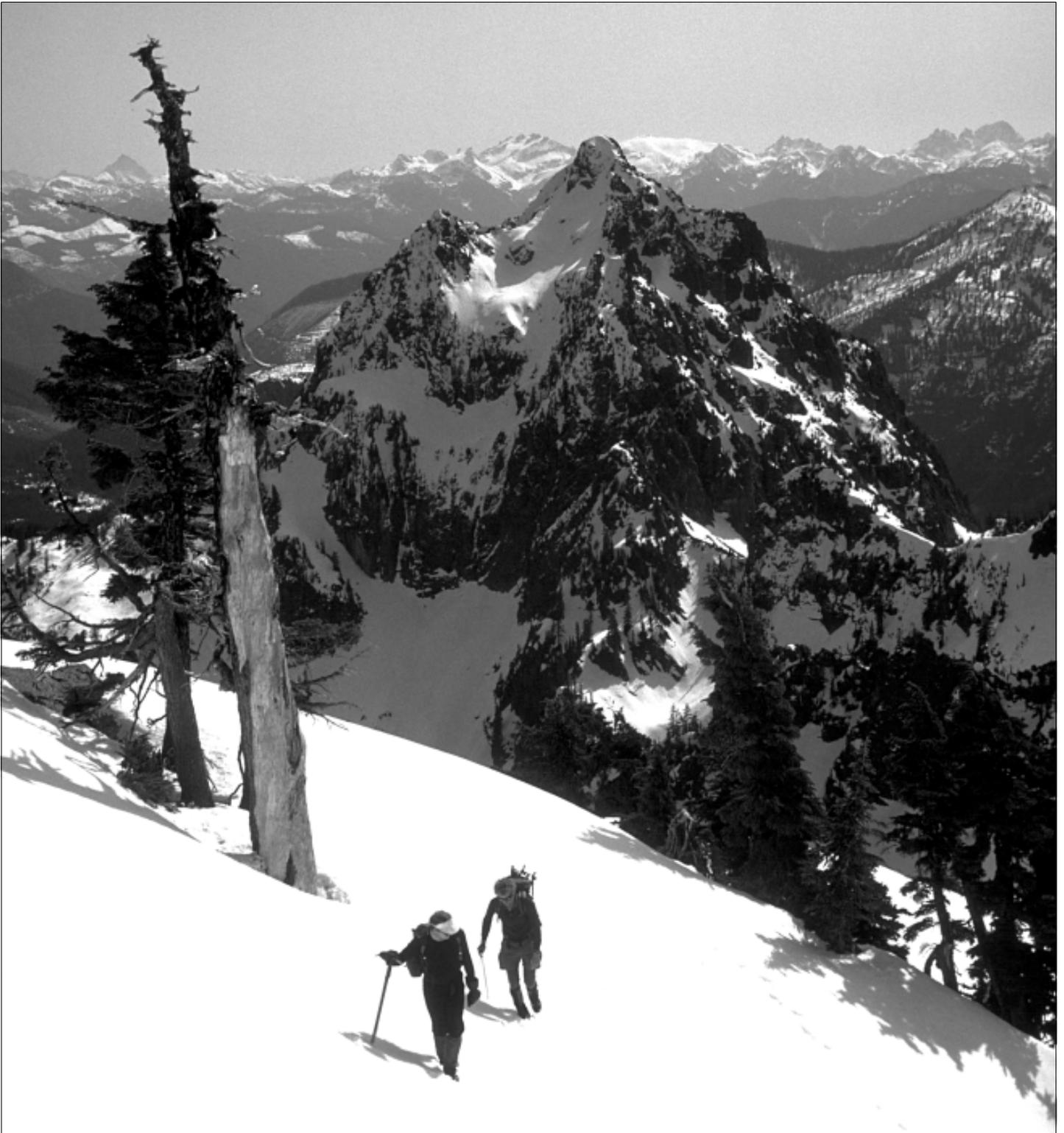

THE WILD CASCADES

THE JOURNAL OF THE NORTH CASCADES CONSERVATION COUNCIL

WINTER 2002



Climbers on Gunn Pk., Merchant Pk. in background. —JOHN ROPER PHOTO

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The Wild Cascades

Journal of the North Cascades Conservation Council

EDITOR: Betty Manning

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

Over the past third of a century the NCCC has led or participated in campaigns to create the North Cascades National Park Complex, Glacier Peak Wilderness, and other units of the National Wilderness System from the W.O. Douglas Wilderness north to the Alpine Lakes Wilderness, the Henry M. Jackson Wilderness, the Chelan-Sawtooth Wilderness 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.

MEMBERSHIP

The NCCC is supported by member dues and private donations. These support publication of *The Wild Cascades* and lobbying activities. (NCCC is a non-tax-deductible 501(c)4 organization.) Membership dues for one year are: \$10 - low income/student; \$20 - regular; \$25 - family; \$50.00 - Contributing; \$100 - patron; \$1000 - Sustaining. A one-time life membership dues payment is \$500.



The North Cascades Foundation supports the NCCC's nonpolitical efforts. Donations are tax-deductible as a 501(c)3 organization. Please make your check(s) out to the organization of your choice. The Foundation can be reached through NCCC mailing address:

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Founded in 1957
SEATTLE, WASHINGTON

The President's Report

Winter 2002

By now I am sure that everyone reading this magazine has heard about the sale of the Weyerhaeuser Snoqualmie Tree Farm to a private non-profit group called the Evergreen Forest Trust. The deal, a closely guarded secret until the moment it was trumpeted in the local papers, involves a purchase of some 100,000 acres of mostly logged-over land in the area just west of the Alpine Lakes Wilderness and generally surrounding the North Fork Snoqualmie River. The objective of this transaction is preventing suburban development, freeway by-passes, and other non-forest uses. As I understand the goals of the EFT, animal habitat and riparian areas would receive protection. Continued logging would be the primary method for paying off Weyerhaeuser, although this logging would be at a reduced level. There are a lot of details about funding, management, board members, goals and other things that I do not completely understand. Despite my lack of knowledge, this seems a laudable accomplishment for the folks that put this together and a good deal for the rest of us, at least better than the bad deal we were getting before.

Why am I not happier about all this? Maybe I am still sour grapes that this had to be done at all. If things had been different a hundred or so years ago when all that public land was transferred to private ownership then we might have had a better 100,000 acres to work with. Maybe my problem is that I see a strangely similar parallel to the heroic Army officer who has to call in an artillery barrage on his own position while being over-run by the godless hordes. Log it to save it. Maybe I don't understand how the good people who put this deal together intend to replicate themselves over the years. Let us hope there is not a hostile takeover of EFT in 30 or 40 years when the small portion of protected forest has re-grown to the point of being so financially irresistible that cutting it makes sense.

Apparently, management of the recreational resource will not change from the present owner's approach. The sinister locked gates will remain, to be opened only by those with the right key or the exorbitantly priced permit. I suspect logging roads will still be maintained to a much higher standard than the present public road now available to those willing to endure the bone-jarring drive to one of the few trailheads open on USFS land. What happens to the lowland lakes that could help take the camping pressure off the overused lakes on public property? No one is asking my opinion and probably not yours.

Perhaps what would make me feel better is if some mechanism for public input were established. Is it correct to say that since the public did not put up the money that they have no say in whether there are public toilets along the one public road accessing the area? It seems to me that this close-by part of the world is too important in the long term to be completely under the control of a few individuals, no matter how good-hearted they or their successors may be.

These 100,000 acres are being protected from sprawl and to some extent, for wildlife. This is good of course. I am truly glad that people stepped up to the plate to do something. When this same forest was acquired by other private entities 100 years ago, logging and development were good. Values change. What mechanism will be in place for our grandchildren to make value judgments? Will the Evergreen Forest Trust, whatever it has become by then, care what they think? And what will be the new price?

Marc Bardsley

PROPOSED STEHEKIN LAND EXCHANGE

[The following letter was sent to Superintendent Paleck regarding the NCCC position on the proposed Stehekin Land Exchange. As of this printing, we have received no reply from Superintendent Paleck.]

William Paleck, Superintendent
North Cascades National Park
2105 Highway 20
Sedro Woolley, Washington 98284

Dear Superintendent Paleck:

I understand that you are presently in negotiations with Cragg Courtney for a land trade in Stehekin. I would like to know what land is under consideration and how this trade furthers park purposes. In the event an agreement is reached, please make sure that the NCCC receives notice of a request for public comments under NEPA provisions and issuance of an environmental impact statement or environmental assessment. The NCCC expects as well a disclosure of appraised values of the parcels to be traded and the methods by which these figures were reached, information which is essential for assessment of whether the deal serves the public interest.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Carolyn McConnell
NCCC Board

PHONE SERVICE PROPOSED AND FOUGHT IN STEHEKIN

[Carolyn McConnell, NCCC Board member, represented the North Cascades Conservation Council at a community meeting in Stehekin on a proposal for installation of a phone system there. (The following letter to Superintendent Paleck restates our position.)

William Paleck, Superintendent
North Cascades National Park
2105 Highway 20
Sedro Woolley, Washington 98284

Dear Superintendent Paleck:

As a third-generation property owner and part-time resident of Stehekin, and as a member of the board of directors of the North Cascades Conservation Council, I am writing in regards the proposal by WeavTel to install a phone system in Stehekin. The following are issues that should be addressed in your assessments of the proposal under NEPA.

The facilities for this system, including construction of at least three buildings, will have direct negative environmental impacts. You mentioned in the hearing of February 6 in Stehekin that some of these facilities will be situated on NPS land leased through a special use permit, effectively transferring land from public to private use indefinitely; such a transfer must satisfy a heavy burden of proof that it serves the public interest. These facilities may also require additional development of the PUD power plant at Company Creek, which has both direct environmental impacts and potentially the long-term consequence of facilitating further development of the Stehekin Valley.

Yet, as I mentioned in my comments at the hearing, these are not the fundamental issues. Most important is the dramatic change installation of the phone system will

have on Stehekin's unique community. Just as important as the lack of road access to the rest of the world is the absence of household phone service, which fundamentally colors day-to-day human interactions in the valley. Because we have no phones in our homes, interactions between community members are necessarily face-to-face, personal, and primary.

Interactions with the outside world are highly restricted. Furthermore, as household phone service, cell phones, and all sorts of instantaneous communication have grown increasingly pervasive and omnipresent nearly everywhere but Stehekin, Stehekin has grown even more unique and therefore even more precious as a place apart. This is what draws residents and visitors to Stehekin. Phone service would completely transform who comes to Stehekin and dramatically increase development pressure.

This project bears all the marks of a publicly financed boondoggle. In the hearing, it was stated that the project would cost between \$900,000 and \$1.7 million, an astounding amount for a community of fewer than 100 year-round residents. This money would come from the rest of the nation's contributions to universal access funds; I question the appropriateness of such subsidy to a community that is not impoverished, and that would have the effect of enriching a corporation while destroying the community's unique character.

The federal telecommunications legislation that provides this funding was designed to insure that a community wasn't cut off from a utility simply because providing the utility wasn't profitable. A situation such as Stehekin's—a community deliberately set aside from development by

HIGHLIGHTS of North Cascades Conservation Council Board Meetings October 21, 2001 and January 20, 2002

an act of Congress—is utterly distinct. The legislation mandating the National Park Service to preserve unimpaired the wild beauty of Stehekin and allow the continuation of its small, unique human community surely takes precedence over the telecommunications legislation. Central to the purpose of Congress in creating the North Cascades National Park was preventing construction of any road into Stehekin. Such a road would have destroyed what made Stehekin special; introduction of household phone service is of a piece with creating a road, and would be just as surely destructive of Stehekin's magic.

This project cuts directly to the core of the Park's purposes in Stehekin, and must be assessed in these terms. It is a "major federal action" and clearly requires a full Environmental Impact Statement, rather than merely an Environmental Assessment.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Carolyn McConnell,
NCCC Board Member

CC: WTC, Cliff Courtney, North Cascades Conservation

Council Board of Directors, NPS Pacific Region

Director John Reynolds, Chelan County PUD, WeavTel

LAKE CHELAN BURN

The 55,000-acre Rex Creek fire of 2001 scorched trees along Lake Chelan. Downed trees have been removed from the Chelan Lakeshore Trail but the Forest Service, worried about whatever, has "closed" the trail, whatever that means, but will dither over it until later in summer.

- NCCC Board voted to join the national Natural Trails and Waters Coalition, a coalition of environmental organizations fighting off-road vehicle damage on public lands.

- Seattle City Light Helicopter Snow Survey

The National Park Service has been informed that NCCC will approve the Seattle City Light Sno-Tel installation at Beaver Pass under the following conditions: (1) one helicopter flight per year; (2) no additional structures be built; (3) at termination of use site be returned to natural state; (4) no transfer of NPS property to Seattle City Light.

The National Park Service has agreed to these points.

Seattle City Light has for years accessed Beaver Pass area for snow monitoring, primarily by helicopter, involving many trips per year. Their proposal is to install automatic measuring equipment at an off-trail site. Installation would be by helicopter, with one yearly maintenance trip in late fall.

- NCCC Board action: Our letter to the editor of the *Seattle Times* supported the Crystal Mountain Coalition's opposition to the proposed extension of the Crystal Mountain Ski Area. Biological integrity of the area would be compromised; damage to the view of Mount Rainier National Park; damage to the Pacific Crest Trail; damage by compromising areas now used by backcountry skiers; and increased traffic on the highway causing vehicle congestion.

- Mountain Goats. The Sauk/Suiattle people seek a ban on hunting mountain goats in the Cascades whose numbers have dropped sharply. Indiscriminate helicopter research in the Glacier Peak Wilderness is one apparent cause. A newspaper article reported that helicopters are having a lark,

landing where no one else can go.

- Kennecott-Miners Ridge Transfer

The Forest Service has indicated it will approve a trade with Chelan County PUD to obtain 360 acres of inholding at Miner's Ridge, in exchange for snow-measuring installation at Lyman Lake.

- Chelan Dam Relicensing: The Chelan Dam license will expire in 2004. The National Fisheries Service has proposed a flow plan for the dam which has consternated Chelan County PUD. The Forest Service and the National Park Service are insistent that their objectives be met. An endowment fund is being planned to take care of some of these demands. There are concerns about lake-level management and woody debris floating on the lake. At question is whether there should be a 30- or 50-year license. The relicensing document was scheduled to go to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission in March.

- Baker Dam Relicensing: A final proposal for the Baker Dam relicensing is being developed. Wildlife, vegetation mapping, and analysis of species research is ongoing. There is concern as to whether there has been any consideration given to mitigate the loss of fauna and flora by inundation of habitat by the dams creating Shannon and Baker reservoirs.

Board Action: That the North Cascades Conservation Council proposes that with the relicensing of the Baker dam projects, mitigation should be considered for the loss of wildlife habitat with the dams and the Baker Lake and Lake Shannon water backups onto wildlife habitat lands, and the North Cascades Conservation Council would consider being interveners in the relicensing in order to ensure the mitigation.

The government agencies are aggressively preparing for President Bush's anticipated new and improved fee program scheduled to be introduced in the spring of 2002. Permanent fee legislation is on a fast track and we must become significantly more active in our effort to end this program and prevent Bush's replacement program from going anywhere.

The sum of the bad news is simply this — AS THINGS STAND, opposition to fee demo will probably not reach critical proportions until after recreation users fees are permanently authorized.

The sum of the good news is this — the AMERICAN PUBLIC WILL NEVER ACCEPT permanent recreation user fees and will eventually overturn any such program and will restore free access to public lands in the years to come.

The Rising Cost of Using Public Lands — Fee-Demo

[Note: The author of the appended Op-Ed, Mike Lee of Alaska, is a retired superintendent for State Parks in Fairbanks. When he writes about the "Rising cost of using public lands" he is writing from the perspective of a land manager — and not as some crazed anti-fee-demo activist.]

Yet Mike Lee's Op-Ed is unlike anything any currently employed land manager might dare to write. In fact, what you are about to read is a more devastating critique of fee-demo than what most anti-fee-demo activists could write — because, as a former land manager, Mike Lee understands precisely how the system works.]

Fairbanks Daily News-Miner

Rising cost of using public lands

March 18, 2002

By Mike Lee

How would you feel about paying to hunt, fish, or even walk on public lands in Alaska? Do you think it can't happen? It is happening! All over America, fees are being initiated for the privilege of being on public lands. Not just for camping or going into Denali National Park, but all entries on public lands.

In Alaska and elsewhere, higher and higher fees are being charged and many areas are being concessioned to private operators who must make a profit from your visit. In many cases a private company now controls your access to public land or

water. Denali National Park, for instance had a small gate fee for many years. Then a bus system on which nearly everyone must ride in order to visit the park was started. It was initially run by the Park Service and was nearly free. But, now, this avenue of visiting the park has been privatized and the fee increased by 10 times. A family of four spends about \$120 for a 12-hour visit to the park. How often can you afford to visit?

Elected officials have decided that it makes no sense to charge loggers to log, ranchers to graze cattle, and miners to dig, and not charge the public to recreate on the same lands. The U.S. Forest Service still hasn't instituted as many fees in Alaska as it has Outside, but it will come. A program called "Fee Demo" is affixing user fees to recreational activities. In Colorado, one must pay \$10 per person to drive up either Pikes Peak or Mt. Evans. Hiking above 10,000 feet, parking, walking a nature trail cost money now. Driving up to Mt. St. Helens costs about \$10 per person.

Agencies tell you the money is being used in the area where it is collected to fix a backlog of maintenance needs. But why are there maintenance backlogs on federal lands when the federal government is sending surplus money back to taxpayers? It's because government officials have decided to under-fund maintenance of public facilities to stimulate support for user fees. And get this, the area doesn't really get to keep the money because as revenues from fees increase, Congress/legislature decreases the amount of tax money that goes to that area. In many cases the overall maintenance money still declines.

The issue isn't really a backlog of maintenance needs, and the fight is not between "we the people" and the managing agencies like the Forest Service, state parks, or the Bureau of Land Management. The issue is between the people and their elected government, and it's this: Do we want to

fund government services with user fees, as well as fund them with taxes?

Supporting public recreation through user fees is expensive, intrusive, and discriminatory. You must hire people in remote places to collect the money, process it and get it to government treasuries miles away. You must hire police, build entry stations, buy safes, computers, and vehicles. Fees discriminate because they keep some families from visiting their public lands.

Then there is the change in perception. In the past, if there was any notification that you were entering public lands, it was a sign saying "Welcome," and naming the managing agency. You rightly felt like an owner.

Now with the introduction of user fees, one must pass through some type of gate or station. It's more like going to Disneyland or Wild Kingdom. The experience is greatly diminished.

We Alaskans look at the Lower 48 and shudder at the regulations, fees and taxation. But with the advent of Fee Demo, and similar programs on state lands, people in Alaska will soon be paying big bucks for outdoor recreation. If you don't like this prospect, write your elected official, state and federal, and tell them, "No fees should be charged for basic entry onto public lands. Continue to fund this activity with general funds." Tell them money will come to government because the economy is greatly stimulated by users buying goods and services to support their recreating. Get involved yourself, and volunteer to help with recreational facilities. This will be much more rewarding than paying fees.

Alaskans, these fee programs are moving fast! Within 10 years, many of the areas where you now hunt, fish, and wander, will be too expensive to visit and be changed forever.

The Elko Daily Free Press

November 9, 2001

Big Brother is lurking in the wilderness. There are rumors that the USFS and BLM are secretly working in partnership with the Department of Defense on Technology that will identify and automatically eliminate backcountry recreationists who do not emit the electromagnetic signature associated with a valid, fully paid, recreation permit. The code name for this top-secret program is: "Star Wars – Missile Defense Program".

A Winnemucca man uncovered a hidden video camera buried in the sagebrush along a wilderness area boundary and when he dug it up, he discovered it was labeled with a U.S. Department of Interior property sticker.

The Oregonian

December 8, 2001

Michael Milstein

A federal judge in Oregon has ruled that the U.S. Forest Service far exceeded its authority by charging recreation fees at thousands of trailheads, pullouts and other sites in the Northwest when Congress allowed fees at no more than 100 sites nationally.

Hundreds of thousands of people have paid the fees since 1996 by buying the Northwest Forest Pass.

"The ruling is on a point that is moot in the future, but it proves the Forest Service got away with murder for years," said Scott Silver of the Bend group, Wild Wilderness.

Fee-Demo Opponent

Congressman Pete DeFazio, D-Oregon, has vowed to block any permanent status for user fees, saying they'll "turn public forests into playgrounds for the societal 'haves.'"

The Oregonian reports that the Region 6 office of the Forest Service is reviewing all fee sites, with a thought to eliminating some as time goes on, concentrating on the "money-makers."

If the Bush motion to make demo fees permanent goes through in the 2003 budget, the result is likely to be the first full scrutiny by Congress it has ever had.

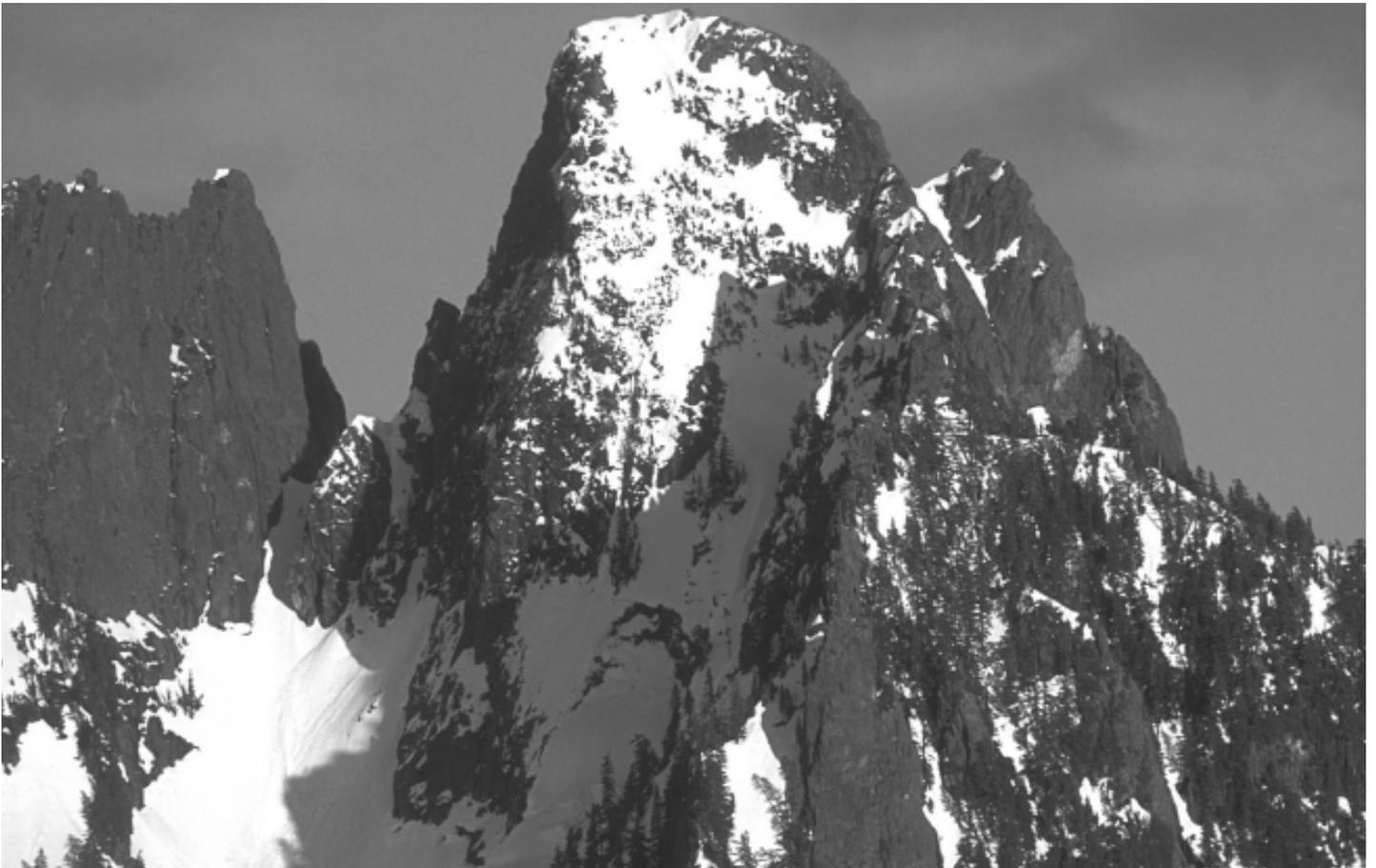
Wild Wilderness
is organizing a
National Day of Action,
June 15.

For details see
www.wildwilderness.org

**JUNE 15
IS OUR
NATIONAL
DAY OF
ACTION
STOP
FEE-DEMO**



Mt. Baring from Mt. Persis. — JOHN ROPER PHOTO



Garfield and Court Ecbelle from the north. — KEVIN GERAGHTY PHOTO

Skykomish Wilderness Update

The press of congressional business and events in general have not helped to speed along the proposed new Wilderness for the Skykomish Wild Country. Senator Patty Murray, Congressman Rick Larsen and their staffs have put a lot of work into crafting a wilderness proposal which breaks the mold of previous efforts in that it focuses protection on productive, lower elevation areas, and salmon streams, rather than just the higher areas which have comprised the bulk of previous wilderness proposals.

A spokesman for Senator Patty Murray said on March 21 that a bill to place about 118,000 acres of a proposed Sky Peaks Wilderness could be introduced in the Senate "later this spring." Congressman Rick Larson likely would introduce a companion bill in the House. The bill has yet to be introduced, and the closer we get to the fall elections the less likelihood there is of passage this year.

Opposition to Sky Wilderness Proposal:

Snoqualmie-Mt. Baker Forest Service spokesman Ron DeHart said the only major

opposition is snowmobilers.

The Backcountry Bicycle Trails Club has posted on its website a vehement opposition to the Sky Peaks Wilderness, urging bikers to write to Senator Patty Murray. Scrub the lengthy screed for rhetoric and the story is that "the BBTC is for wilderness as long as they can ride their bikes there."

The local representative of the International Mountain Bike Association (IMBA), when informed of the BBTC agitation, went tut-tut, saying IMBA doesn't never head-on assault wilderness proposals.

However, the IMBA group in Orange County, the Road Warriors Society, is violently attacking the Sierra Club's proposals for wilderness. Very inflammatory. Equates the Sierra Club with the Arab terrorists, accuses the club of stirring up war, of infringing on FREEDOM, of total corruption, cites its "emotional appeals and false facts" to oppose drilling in ANWAR.

WALKS TO TAKE

WHILE PLOTTING THE SKY WILDERNESS

A finger of "Management Zone" intrudes on wildness that belongs in the Alpine Lakes Wilderness. The **West Fork Miller River** washes the feet of granite walls, froths over granite slabs, all very Sierra-like. The play-miners who have been digging holes in the ground for a century have had their share of hobby fun, should be thrown a few pieces of eight, and the valley locked safely in the Wilderness.

Silver Creek reeks of history. It was the original routé from the North Fork

Skykomish to the imagined treasure trove "as rich as Monte Cristo." The hiker equipped with *The Guide to the Monte Cristo Area* by Harry Majors and Richard McCollum, and/or *Mining in the Pacific Northwest* by Lawrence K. Hodges, both out of print (go to the library), can breathe the atmosphere of two settlements of the 1890s, Galena and Mineral City, 2500 mining claims, and treasure troves of rusted-out frying pans.

— TRAILS ON THE EDGE — MIDDLE FORK SNOQUALMIE RIVER VALLEY

Explorations are in progress by the environmental community, including members of the North Cascades Conservation Council, to identify possibilities for new and/or improved trails from the "grand central trailhead" at the junction of the Taylor River and the Middle Fork.

The closeness to the teeming trail-walkers of Puget Sound City requires an increase in opportunities for experiencing edge wilderness without intruding the deep — for day hikes that leave undisturbed wildlife core habitats. The MidFORC web site has notes on four hikes. For the benefit of those who don't know what a web site is (except at face level on autumn trails), following are the on-line descriptions of four routes being assessed.

RAINY LAKE

Round trip from Gateway Bridge, 7 miles

Before the bridge was built, Rainy Lake was a fairly remote destination. You had to get across the river, and there was no trail once you did. Now the bridge makes crossing the river a snap; and for better or worse, some informal trail-builder has brushed out a route much of the way to Rainy Lake. It's still not a route for someone without cross-country travel skills (and a map and compass, if you haven't been there before), but it's no longer an arduous route.

Cross the bridge and turn right, downstream, off the officially maintained trail. You are following vestiges of the old pre-road era Mid-Fork trail. Part of the route follows a gravel bar along the river. When you reach Rainy Creek, cross it and head upstream. You should be on a fairly well-defined trail. The route ascends gradually and steadily up the creek valley. Somewhere around the 2000-foot contour, near a couple of waterfalls, the trail reaches

Continued on page 12

Not Just the Sky

Ken Wilcox

The Wild Skykomish campaign to protect more than 100,000 acres of North Cascades wildlands northeast of Seattle, is urgent, promising, and is a key step toward protecting many other pristine and vulnerable wildlands scattered throughout our state: the Kettle River Range, Pasayten Rim, Golden Horn, Dark Divide, Abercrombie-Hooknose, North Fork Entiat, Finney Peak, Cascade River, Sauk Mountain, and numerous others, including major additions to existing wilderness areas protected in the 1984 Washington Wilderness Bill.

In my neck of these woods, a number of key areas remain unprotected, some of them well known to NCCC members: Sauk Mountain, Shuksan Lake, Skyline Divide, Church Mountain, Cougar Divide, Loomis Mountain, Park Falls, Ruth Creek, Thompson Creek, Slate Mountain, and the entire west flank of the Twin Sisters Range.

Imagine all the beautiful photos you've seen of cathedral forest, clear, rushing streams, soundless lakes, and the diverse creatures that depend on these places — wrapped in the arms of spectacular peaks, glaciers and subalpine parklands of the North Cascades—and you have a fair image of what's at stake.

About a year ago (thanks in part to the Bush administration's flagrant interference with new federal rules designed to keep roadless areas roadless), a group of local volunteers assembled in Bellingham to begin developing a new strategy for wilderness protection in the Mount Baker region.

The group works both independently and in concert with the Wild Washington Campaign.

Our working group, made up of representatives of several environmental groups, including NCCC, knew from the start that the wildest remaining enclaves of the Skagit and Nooksack River watersheds clearly deserved protection. Some of us learned this through our previous work with the Mount Baker Wilderness Association and the Washington Wilderness Coalition in the early 1980s. Others, like NCCC board member Polly Dyer, who came to one of our first meetings last year, knew it well before we did, as she spoke of NCCC's tireless efforts to protect these places.

To move our campaign forward, volunteers adopted specific areas and began to explore them on their own, to photograph them and gather information that would help build the argument for protection. Thanks to the generosity of the North Cascades Foundation and The Mountaineers Foundation, we have received two grants to help move this important work forward.

As a fledgling committee, we met with Congressman Rick Larsen last August who offered at least some philosophical support. Larsen has taken a leadership role in developing a Skykomish Wilderness proposal with Senator Patty Murray's office. It was clear from our meeting that to win Larsen's leadership on proposals closer to our own backyard, we need to demonstrate substantial support in both Whatcom and Skagit counties and in the

communities that would most likely benefit from wilderness protection in the Mount Baker area.

Demonstrating that support may turn out to be the easy part.

Twenty years ago, wilderness advocates were forced to confront an enormous timber lobby, potent ORV, mining and development interests, a blatantly anti-environmental administration in Washington D.C., a hell-bent-on-logging Forest Service, a green-leaning schizophrenic public, and the usual gaggle of skittish politicians. Nonetheless, under these rather hostile circumstances, two million acres of wildlands were ultimately protected (and nobody lost an election because of it). It was a major, albeit partial, victory.

Today, there is no timber industry clucking with any credibility at all about the supposed tens of thousands of lost jobs that new wilderness designations might cause. Indeed, times have changed. The Mount-Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest decided some years ago that the need to protect environmental and recreation values on the forest far outweighed the need to continue clearcutting. The unfortunate demise of the northern spotted owl helped assure that transition in the 1990s, a decade in which harvest levels on the Forest declined by 86 per cent.

Mining and development issues are less prominent in many areas today, especially along the west slope of the North Cascades. Snowmobiles and other off-road vehicles are still a pain in the neck in places where they don't belong, but the general public is almost as weary

of them as those who have fought for years to keep them from destroying what's still pristine.

There are a few private inholding issues to resolve. However, a recent favorable federal court decision in Montana concerning access to a private inholding may be helpful in negotiations to acquire key parcels if development would (or does) obviously conflict with the wildness nearby.

And today, people appear to be much less schizoprenic about their desire to see wild places stay wild. While there's a lingering tendency of Americans to keep voting anti-environmental bums back into office (go figure), there are good reasons to be hopeful. According to a *Los Angeles Times* poll conducted last year, nine out of ten respondents agreed that "it is important that wilderness and open spaces be preserved."

As reported by the Wild Washington Campaign (and others), another pollster, the Melmann Group, queried the nation in July 1999 and found that "the overwhelming majority of Americans favor protecting more national forest land as wilderness." Furthermore, "63 per cent support a proposal to protect wild areas larger than 1,000 acres, while more than 70 per cent favor a ban on oil drilling and logging."

Admittedly, there are still a few naysayers hanging around who continue to oppose new wilderness on its face. Like Chuck Cushman, wise-use activist and leader of the American Land Rights Association. Last year, after Senator Murray announced her support for new wilderness, the Seattle P-I quoted Cushman: "Is there no end, Senator Murray, to the greed of those who would lock people off federal lands?" It's a familiar argument that fewer people seem willing to buy anymore.

As with most unprotected wild-

lands, saving Sauk Mountain and other unspoiled areas near Mount Baker may depend on strong public support. Will the traditionally timber-dependent communities of rural Whatcom and Skagit counties be willing to endorse proposals for new wilderness in the region? We think so, perhaps on environmental grounds alone, but especially when the economic arguments are more clearly articulated.

In both counties (and across the state) it is our protected parks and wilderness areas that are the principal draw for tourism and recreation in these "up-river" communities. Hundreds of thousands of tourists and recreationists spend far more dollars each year as nonconsumptive users of federal lands than does the timber industry, or the ORV industry, or the mining industry. Winning wilderness designation for equally spectacular, but not-yet-protected, wildlands can only increase the potential for these communities to both preserve the environment while at the same time enjoying increased economic prosperity.

Many, like the Wild Washington Campaign, point to research indicating that "wilderness is an economic development tool, increasing land values and attracting outside economic investment." In fact, people and businesses purposely choose to locate near protected wildlands because of "environmental and physical amenities, scenery, outdoor recreation, and the pace of life."

The campaign website (www.wildwashington.org) indicates that Washington state residents "by a 38 to 1 margin, commented in favor of a proposed rule to protect 58 million acres of national forest roadless areas across the country, including nearly 2 million acres in the state." Nationally, the roadless initiative attracted comments from a record 1.6 million people.

Well over 90 per cent wanted these areas protected.

Despite the decidedly anti-environmental stance of the Bush administration, the battle for Washington's wilderness should be far easier to win this time around. Not a shoe-in, but easily worth the effort. Public support has never been so resounding. Wilderness advocates should recognize that, cast off the timidness, and insist that our elected leaders here in Washington state simply do the right thing.

There are still 1.8 million acres of inventoried roadless wildlands in Washington state that are not yet protected, and more than a million more acres that have not been inventoried. It's not just the Skykomish or Sauk Mountain or Mount Baker or Dark Divide that are important. There are wildlands across the state where volunteers are working hard to ensure they remain wild for the benefit of our generation and coming generations.

If we truly want wildlands protected, whether as park, wilderness or otherwise, our senators and members of congress will need to hear from us. Soon.

To help out with the statewide effort or any of the local campaigns for new wilderness, contact the Wild Washington Campaign at (206) 633-1992 or check out the website at www.wildwashington.org

Continued from page 9

the boundary of 1930s valley-bottom clear-cutting and passes into old growth. After a few hundred more feet of climbing, the trail, heretofore roughly paralleling Rainy Creek, gradually angles west, uphill, away from the creek. The direct route up to the lake alongside Rainy Creek is clifty and brushy, hence the indirection.

Around the 3200-3400 foot level, you need to take a pretty hard left and start traversing up and left (ESE) into the lake basin. This is probably where you are most likely to go wrong. It is easy to just keep on going straight uphill and find yourself on the Preacher-Middle Mountain ridge crest. In general, if you lose the trail, your best approach is to follow the route outlined, independent of the trail; there's a good chance you will pick it up again.

BLETHEN LAKE

Round trip from Taylor River trailhead 10 miles

The Blethen Lake route is largely on the old Quartz Creek road. It traverses mostly second-growth forest with intermittent views out over the valley until the old road peters out about 1/2 mile from the lake. The last 1/2 mile is an informal trail in nice old growth.

The Quartz Creek road branches off from the Taylor River road about 1/2 mile from the Taylor River bridge trailhead. Although the road is gated, it is four-wheel drive standard for the first 2-1/2 miles. At that point a wooden bridge over a ravine has collapsed, leaving a single large long stringer which can be walked if you don't mind heights; otherwise you can scramble down into and out of the ravine. A second collapsed wooden bridge with a single remaining stringer follows shortly. The road gradually deteriorates beyond the collapsed bridges, getting more grown in, wetter, and less roadlike. At about 3-1/2 miles is a third ravine, which must be scrambled (there is no log option on this one). There is a potentially confusing fork somewhere in the next 1 mile of road; take the left (downhill) fork.

The old road ends at about 4-1/2 miles. An informal trail continues straight ahead

for a hundred yards or so, drops down a few feet, and then enters old forest, for the last 1/2 mile to the lake. The edge of the old forest coincides with a land-ownership boundary. Unusually, the second-growth is on public (national forest) land and the old growth is on private land, owned by the Cuginis, who have apparently offered to sell it for a few million, in case you are wondering what a half-section full of old-growth red-cedar is going for these days.

The prominent rocky summit visible from the Blethen shore is Bessemer Mountain. The low saddle to the right of Bessemer is Hancock Pass, 500 feet above the lake, the lowest point in the Mid-Fork-North-Fork Snoqualmie divide. Upper Blethen Lake lies almost exactly on the height of land in Hancock Pass, a brushy 2/5 mile further. Regrettably, it isn't worth the trip: Weyerhaeuser has thoroughly scalped Upper Blethen and its surroundings, leaving a few scraggly trees to line the shore of what must once have been a nice little lake.

ROOSTER MOUNTAIN

The first half of the Rooster climb is on old roads: first the gated but still four-wheel-standard Quartz Creek road, then the increasingly decrepit and trail-like logging road that switchbacks up to the south basin on Rooster. The logging road forks at about 3200 feet, at the end of a switchback. Stay left (take the switchback) rather than continuing straight. The south basin, logged in the 60s, has regenerated poorly and is very brushy. In summer when there is no snow cover the challenge is to avoid as much brush as possible. The best approach, with minimal brush, seems to be to skirt the basin in a counter-clockwise direction, getting on upper talus slopes as soon as possible, and leaving the old logging road around 3800 feet. The direct line, straight up the middle of the basin, goes through difficult brush and is not recommended without snow cover. Enter pleasing old forest about a thousand feet below the summit; climb steeply to the ridge crest, or just below it on the south side, and follow it to the summit. The summit block is a

narrow rocky crest, which offers about 20 feet of class 4 climbing. The views are good even if you choose not to climb the summit block, but from the true summit they are panoramic and vertiginous.

Other routes up Rooster have their rewards but are considerably more difficult.

GARFIELD BALCONY

Round trip from Grand Central Trailhead 1-1/2 miles

A grand view for a very modest climb of about 1000 feet, highly recommended. Leave the Middle Fork road on "hell hill" a couple of hundred yards beyond the Taylor road-Middle Fork road fork. Walk uphill and slightly left through the woods until you reach the crest of the rounded, if well-defined, ridge separating the Taylor River valley from the Middle Fork valley. Follow this crest uphill. It steepens as you climb. At some point there will be a ledgy area on your right. The slope then flattens out again, and uphill you will see a cliff-base through the trees. At this point, stop climbing and start traversing rightwards (east). You shouldn't have to gain or lose much elevation, the cliff base should be more or less visible on your left as you traverse. Eventually there will be clifty areas below you as well; you will be walking a moderately sloping wooded area between an upper and a lower cliff band. You'll know the prominent view ledge when you see it. It is marked by an old mossy cairn, if you have any doubts.



High Divide ridgeline north of Mount Baker—needs wilderness protection—©2001 Brett Baunton

Massive Blowout on Mt. Persis or, The Triumph of Free Enterprise

Rick McGuire

TWC readers with long memories may recall reading about the threat to Mt. Persis and the trail up its west ridge back in 1995. NCCC and other groups tried unsuccessfully to prevent logging on the very steep western flanks of Mt. Persis by Longview Fibre Company. The logging went ahead, turning a beautiful forested ridge into a clearcut wasteland. But not just the scenery was ruined. A small creek which runs off the logged area crosses a logging road built by Longview, a road which was never maintained or decommissioned. This spring the road failed, sending a huge debris torrent downslope over a mile into the Proctor Creek valley, moving thousands if not millions of tons of earth, trees, stumps and rocks.

The Proctor Creek road was obliterated in three places, and vast quantities of sediment were sent downstream into Proctor Creek and the Skykomish River. Proctor Creek had begun to heal in recent years from earlier heavy logging, and was home to a recovering salmon population. Now that recovery has been set back for years. And no doubt Longview Fibre Company views this as an "Act of God."

The Deity may be blamed for many things, but in this case His/Her guilt is only indirect for allowing Longview Fibre to share this universe with the rest of us. Any justice for Longview will likely have to wait until the afterlife, since it is extremely unlikely that the state Department of Natural Resources will take any action. Indeed, rumor has it that DNR employees were told to keep quiet about this, or else. Public resources, such as the salmon of the Skykomish River system, can still be harmed with impunity by the timber industry, even in this 21st century.

Not only can a company such as Longview get away with destroying salmon

habitat, they can even be subsidized with public money to do it. The Skykomish Ranger District of the Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest is planning to grant new easements to Longview Fibre and rebuild over 4 miles of old roads near Lowe Creek which have been returning to nature, so that Longview can avoid the costs of building a bridge for its existing right-of-way and get cheaper access to property it owns in the Index Creek area. Adding insult to injury, not only does the Forest Service propose to give free easements to Longview, they are proposing to enter into a "cost share agreement for this road, in other words, to use taxpayers' money to pay for easier access for Longview.

If this sounds outrageous, it's because it is. Free enterprise is great for the other guy, but give me socialism every time, especially if I'm a rich corporation. Longview and the current District Ranger at the Skykomish Forest Service office, Barbara Busse, have made a specialty of this. Several years ago Busse granted an easement on Gunn Peak to Longview under a "categorical exclusion," meaning there was no avenue of appeal, permitting the bulldozers to go to work as soon as her pen left the paper, which they did. This time she's going one better, not only proposing to grant easements under the same type of categorical exclusion, but to actually use public money to pay Longview's way. This comes at a time when the Forest Service can't afford to maintain the trails, roads and campgrounds that it has. Yet somehow they plan to find the money to fix up over 4 miles of road which leads to no trails, campgrounds or any other recreational attractions, a road which will benefit no one but Longview. NCCC, ALPS and other groups plan to do all they can to shine some daylight onto these dark deeds.

Middle Fork Access and Travel Management Plan Released

The Snoqualmie District of the U. S. Forest Service has released its long awaited Access and Travel Management (ATM) plan for public comment. Most conservation and recreation groups (including NCCC) are supporting the Forest Service's preferred Alternative E. This would close the upper 8 miles of road above Dingford Creek to motor vehicles, turning a miserable, rough road into an attractive riverside trail. A seasonal gate would be placed at Taylor River and closed Nov 15 - April 15. In addition, the Forest Service has committed to closing the road permanently at Taylor should the problems with shooting, dumping, meth labs, etc., which have plagued the lower valley move upstream.

In addition, the plan also calls for closure and decommissioning of all the spur roads which have been the focus of the illegal activities. The Middle Fork road below Taylor is scheduled for paving in a few years, and money has been appropriated to construct a new campground at Taylor River. It's hoped that these projects, along with the construction of new trails and other facilities, will give a new character to this valley which would have been a national park were it located anywhere else, but which has had a reputation in recent decades as a place to avoid.

NCCC members in Washington state will be sent copies of the Conservationist Alert on the Middle Fork ATM and are strongly urged to write the Forest Service in support of Alternative E.

Grizzlies in the North Cascades

Kevin Geraghty

Nobody knows how many grizzlies remain in the US North Cascades. Biologists, if pressed, will guess “five to twenty bears”; the only thing they are reasonably sure of is that this population is way below the size threshold of long-term viability, which might be something like 200 to 400 bears. They believe that unless bears are brought in to augment the population it is unlikely to recover; it will follow many other isolated montane populations of *ursus arctos* into extinction.

Reintroduction or population augmentation programs for large-bodied carnivores are controversial and, relative to the scale of federal resources available for wildlife conservation, expensive. (Relative to B-2's, they are rounding error) Most of the expense lies not in moving and monitoring of bears, but in the extensive public involvement, consensus-building and planning processes which precede it. The current administration is hostile to such programs; one of Gail Norton's first significant acts as Interior Secretary was to scuttle a long-planned grizzly reintroduction in Idaho's Selway-Bitterroot recovery zone, the best completely unoccupied grizzly habitat in the lower 48. Even under the Clinton administration the US Fish and Wildlife Service never put the North Cascades recovery zone high on the priority list, instead concentrating its admittedly inadequate bear recovery resources on the northern Rockies.

North Cascades grizzlies would seem to be doomed by this fatal combination of population biology and federal indifference; except that, as Americans like to forget, and Canadians like to remind us, Canada is a different country. Virtually the same day last year that Norton publicly killed the Selway-Bitterroot reintroductions, the British Columbia government announced a North Cascades grizzly recovery plan which includes a proposal to move bears to the Canadian North Cascades. This population augmentation proposal has now survived public comment and a change of BC governments; it's looking likely that this fall

the first three female grizzlies will be located, captured, moved, fitted with GPS collars, and released in Manning Provincial Park a few miles north of Washington's Pasayten Wilderness. The plan has a five-year horizon, but it's likely that later five-year plans will continue this practice of annual augmentation if it is judged a success. The plan contemplates a long-range population recovery target of 150 bears in the Canadian North Cascades. The bears, of course, will not recognize international boundaries, and it's likely that many of these bears and their descendants will end up in Washington.

It's a curious irony that from a bear's-eye view, Washington's North Cascades are a much healthier place to be than BC's North Cascades. The US North Cascades Ecosystem grizzly recovery zone is roughly the same size as the Greater Yellowstone and Northern Continental Divide recovery zones in the northern Rockies, each of which support stable populations of 400 or more bears; like those recovery zones, the North Cascades recovery zone is largely in federal ownership and has at its core large contiguous blocks of land under wilderness management regimes. And on US federal lands, bear recovery plans have strong implications for land and road management practices. The British Columbia North Cascades, by contrast — a long-tapering wedge of mountainous land between the Fraser River canyon on the west and the Okanogan plateau on the east — have been handed over almost wholly to resource extractors, and have open road densities which are dangerously high from the perspective of grizzly population viability. Genuflecting, as is traditional in British Columbia, to timber and mining interests, the BC Wildlife branch's plan contains no provisions for closing or decommissioning roads, or reducing extraction intensity in its recovery zone. Partly on this account, conservationist opinion about this plan in British Columbia is decidedly mixed. The Raincoast Conservation Society, for example, regards it as throwing bears away, stripping them from south Chilcotin populations that can ill afford the loss and

moving them to a population sink where the habitat is already too altered for the bear to survive. This sour assessment makes sense if the BC lands are considered in isolation; without Washington habitat, the BC North Cascades in their current condition may not be able to support a self-sustaining population. The fact that the program is financed in part by BC grizzly hunting license fees undoubtedly contributes to BC conservationist hostility. From a cross-border perspective, though, joint recovery efforts take on the appearance of a Jack-Spratt-and-his-wife-style odd-couple relationship. BC has bear populations which can afford to lose a few bears, and the means and political will to move them, but little secure high-quality habitat, at least in the North Cascades. Washington has necessary habitat and a regulatory and legal structure to protect and improve that habitat, but lacks the political will to bring in bears. Between the two of them, the two jurisdictions of this shared ecosystem may just assemble all the necessary pieces to bring the grizzly population back from the brink.

As a matter of interest, the last high-quality grizzly sighting in the Washington Cascades was made by a Canadian bear biologist south of Glacier Peak in 1998 (nobody who knows is willing to say precisely where, but I would guess the White River valley). Sightings without photographic or physical evidence are generally not considered high-quality, unless, that is, you are a bear biologist. On the Canadian side, last year a grizzly was killed on the Coquihalla Highway and several grizzlies were photographed from a mineral-prospecting helicopter. An interesting interpretation of this sighting discrepancy is simply that higher levels of mechanical intrusion and industrial disturbance in BC North Cascades bear habitat make the bears more visible, as well as more vulnerable. An alternate interpretation is that more bears remain up there, despite the poorer habitat conditions; this, in turn, suggests that the North Cascades population may not be entirely cut off from populations in the BC coast ranges to the west.

MILLERS' PERSEVERANCE SAVED TREES, FRAGILE ALPINE HABITATS

Excerpted from *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*,
January 2, 2002

Elaine Porterfield

Joe and Margaret Miller were a newly married Midwestern couple when Joe's job as a federal scientist took them to Colorado in 1947. Within two years, the young former flatlanders had climbed 20 peaks higher than 14,000 feet. They drank in the mountains like champagne, dizzy with their good fortune, bursting with a new and profound love for places in the hills.

They had heavy canvas tents and rucksacks in those days before such modern miracles as Polar Fleece and Gore-Tex, but the Millers were undeterred. In time, their climbing and hiking inculcated in them such a love for the mountains that one day they would become two of the most seminal figures in Northwest conservation.

Among their many accomplishments, the couple were instrumental in the creation and protection of North Cascades National Park, one of the nation's wildest and most remote wildernesses, and they helped found a group devoted to native plants. They are also credited with helping pioneer the restoration of degraded alpine areas in the Northwest.

They did it step by exhausting step up the sides of remote valleys, bowed with the weight of packs full of plants. They did it week after week, alone, in remote mountain campsites, first on vacations, then during retirement, painstakingly cataloging the environment.

Today, it is likely that Joe, 86, and suffering the effects of a broken hip, and Margaret, 70, will never again visit the wild places they helped preserve. Both also suffer from the effects of their favorite environment: Margaret is almost blind with muscular degeneration, likely caused by exposure to the sun at high altitudes without proper eye protection. Joe suffers

from the same ailment, though he has retained more of his eyesight.

Ask the Millers why they have devoted their blood and sweat and better part of their lives to conservation, and they respond with bemusement.

Margaret responds first, "The way I look at it, I was paying back for my pleasure in the mountains. Is that about right, Joe?"

... "It's something we can leave to posterity," he says. "We had an awful lot of fun up here in our earlier years. You have an obligation as well as enjoyment."

... "They are pretty amazing," says Charlie Raines of the Sierra Club in Seattle. "Margaret Miller was my junior high science teacher. Some of her love for the natural world rubbed off on me . . . She was a great teacher and certainly an inspiration for me."

Raines, who directs a project aimed at improving ecological conditions in the central Cascade Mountains, says the Millers are a model for younger people.

... In Seattle, they joined the newly formed Sierra Club . . . [Joe] soon became chairman of the Northwest chapter, just 200 people scattered across four states and two provinces.

An issue that quickly arose was concern over logging practices in the North Cascades. Priceless, ancient trees were being lost, habitat degraded. The region contained some of the most breathtaking lands in the Northwest, if not the country: high jagged peaks, steep ridges, deep valleys, enormous groves of giant cedars, countless cascading waterfalls and more than 300 glaciers.

Something had to be done, and Joe and Margaret threw themselves into a new organization formed in 1958 to try to protect the region: the North Cascades Conservation Council.

"It was quite a struggle," Joe says. "We started lobbying for a national park. It took 10 years, but we finally got it in 1968 . . . It was really something to be happy about."

The couple decided to take early retirement in 1970. That year, they received a phone call from the first superintendent of the North Cascades National Park. Seattle City Light was threatening to raise Ross Dam, which would flood Big Beaver Valley in the park, along with the Canadian Skagit River valley. The superintendent, who had a staff of only six, desperately needed someone to come and catalogue the park's ecosystem. He said, "I have enough work to keep you busy for the rest of your lives" . . . For the next seven years, the couple would drive to the park every other week in the summer, where a ranger would drive them as far as possible into the backcountry, where they would start their hike.

During their time in the wilderness, they carefully catalogued the plants and animals. If they didn't know a plant, they would take a pressing to a University of Washington specialist.

"We used those findings for court hearings regarding the raising of the dam," Margaret says. "The fat was in the fire for almost 10 years . . . The fight reached all the way to Canada, to Ottawa. The ultimately successful effort to stop the raising of the dam was the work of many people."

In addition to testifying at the court hearings, the couple went on the road to inform the public about the need to protect the park. [Joe] showed his slide show 108 times. "We'd show it to anyone who'd watch — garden clubs, the Boy Scouts."

Meanwhile the park superintendent had another need: restoring an alpine area at Cascade Pass abused by unthinking outdoor enthusiasts.

WE SEE BY THE MEDIA

YELLOWSTONE STINK GOES NATIONAL

"It was a real mess. People had pooped, trenched around tents, burned up the meadow."

The conventional thinking at the time was that little could be done to remove fragile alpine areas, and that plants propagated at sea level would never survive at high altitude.

No one had any ideas.

So they started with the basics, collecting the seeds of native plants in the fall. They planted some of the seeds in the abused area of Cascade Pass, cordoning the area off with string. They transplanted some vegetation. The next year a few transplants lived.

They decided to speed things up with cuttings. "We tried lots of different things," she says. "We had some dismal failures. But some things worked. In the spring, we'd put them (the plants) very carefully in our old Kelty packs and hike 3.8 miles up to the pass."

Soon, the couple propagated so many alpine plants they recruited other volunteers to help pack them in. They carried on the work for several years, and their success in restoring the environment eventually gained notice.

The Park Service decided this was the thing to do, and built increasingly bigger greenhouses. It took 25 years but Cascade Pass finally recovered.

The couple have also studied the environmental impact of campsites and documented the effect of forest fires. Melissa Laird, director of gift-giving at the Nature Conservancy in Seattle, says she is humbled by the work of the Millers.

"They're really role models for a lot of us," she says. "They've been doing this work for so long. They've really acted on their beliefs. "They had to act as individuals and as pioneers. They are activists in the most committed sense."

The Bush intention to keep the snowmobiles running and gunning to Old Faithful is among the foulest odors emanating from his think factory. (Please, no rhyming here.) However, until now only the noses of the likes of us appear to have been wrinkled.

— BUT, see the March 18 issue of *Sports Illustrated*. The article by Austin Murphy, "Murphy's Law: Ah, the Scent of Snowmobiles."

— THEN, see the March 25 issue of *The New Yorker*, and the article by Mark Singer on the "mad snowmobilers of Montana": "The High Mark: Mountains, Grizzlies, and the Smell of Exhaust in the Morning."

If the journal of the Extreme notices — and the super-urban "Goings-On About Town"— well, next thing you know there'll be murmuring in the streets.

PETER JENNINGS TEARS THE RAG OFF'N THE BUSH

Monday evening, March 25, ABC News' Peter Jennings featured the Yellowstone story — and one picture is worth a thousand words, if it's on the big screen. Golly knows how many Americans for the first time saw the reality of rangers wearing gas masks.

Next day, a BLUE RIBBON ALERT went out, calling it a "vicious attack . . . on snowmobiles" and calling upon all Blueribboners to write letters to ABC News.

The National Parks Association has suggested that "some folks write ABC supportive e-mails."

<http://more.abcnews.go.com/sections/wnt/DailyNews/snowmobiles020325.html>

[*Skid Marks*, Wildlands Center for Preventing Roads' (usually) biweekly e-mail newsletter, reports on activist efforts to challenge roads and motorized recreation nationwide. *Skid Marks* shares instructive and precedent-setting successes and failures in the campaign to halt motorized abuse of wildland ecosystems.]

PARK SERVICE PROTESTS SNOWMOBILE TRESPASS IN YELLOWSTONE

This winter hundreds, perhaps thousands, of snowmobiles have been trespassing in the wilderness backcountry of Yellowstone National Park (YNP). As reported by the Environmental News Service on March 22, 2002 (<http://ens-news.com/ens/mar2002/2002L-03-22-07.html>), aerial surveys by Yellowstone Park rangers have documented numerous incursions into remote areas of the western region of the park where it borders popular snowmobile areas in Idaho. While hundreds of miles of groomed roads and trails are open to snowmobiles within the park, snowmobilers continue to cross well-marked park boundaries and operate their machines in closed areas, a practice park ranger Bob Seibert calls in "blatant disregard" of park rules.

While ORV groups complain that Park

Service criticism is calculated to influence current efforts to regulate snowmobiles in the park, Yellowstone spokesperson Marsha Karle responds, "What these snowmobilers did was wrong and illegal and there is nothing wrong with letting people know about it."

The National Park Service has been grappling with how to control burgeoning snowmobile use in Yellowstone. Last year the Park Service moved to restrict snowmobile access in order to protect park wildlife from harm and respond to serious pollution problems associated with snowmobiles. However, under pressure from ORV groups and the Bush administration, the NPS has re-opened the issue and is currently considering four alternatives to a plan managing snowmobile impact, two of which would phase out snowmobile use entirely.

CHOOSING UP SIDES

Three times the Republican Party has elected as president candidates who lost at the polls, the second time with the help of federal troops stationed in the former Confederacy, the third with that of the Supreme Court. The first time was fair and square — the mugwimp third party outsmarted itself by throwing the election to Lincoln.

In the aftermath of November 1860, the United States commenced a period of choosing up sides and dis-uniting. Not that we're dusting off our muskets, but we are reminded. . .

While taking alarm at the Derrick Crandalls and Terry Andersons and the troops they are drilling (1,600,000 registered snowmobiles in the US, 4,000,000 ATVs, millions more dirt bikes), take heart by remembering we are not alone:

There are:

Natural Trails and Waters Coalition

Scott Kovarovics, Director
scott_kovarovics@ws.org

and

Public Lands Coalition

Sunny Sorensen, President
35347 S. Stage Road
Medford, Oregon 97501

Michael Zierhut, Secretary
zierhutm@ojai.net
311 North Fulton St.,
Ojai, CA 93023

This group, incorporated (non-profit) in 2001, envisions an ethic of human enjoyment on public lands where the natural values and wildness of the land are held paramount, respected and protected; and where recreation occurs only in harmony with sustainable healthy ecosystems.

The MISSION STATEMENT

Public lands are not created for private profit. Recent corporate efforts to privatize, commercialize and motorize public lands are creating precedents dangerous to the natural world. Now more than ever, these changing dynamics within our society require that we educate the public about ecological integrity, about the traditional values of preservation and conservation, and about responsible

recreation enjoyment of public lands for current and future generations.

- Ensure that ecological integrity and environmental sustainability are the top management priorities for public land agencies.
- Stop motorized recreation not in harmony with healthy ecosystems.
- Stop transfer of public land resources to private ownership or corporate control.
- Stop branding and other forms of commercial identification on public lands.
- Stop corporate philanthropy with strings attached.
- End the Recreational Fee Demonstration Program (Fee Demo) in any version.
- Eliminate agency dependence on profit-taking from public lands.
- Encourage voluntary user donations in lieu of enforced fees.
- Ensure that fees, or the ability to pay, not be exclusionary nor used as a regulator.
- Educate the public, policy makers and elected officials to support our vision for public lands.
- Build a broad coalition dedicated to supporting and promoting our vision and mission.

and

Mike Vandeman

mijvande@pacbell.net
<http://home.pacbell.net/mjvane>

Read the mountain-bike material on his website and links page. He is out there, in the frontlines of California, fed up with bikes and other vehicles in natural areas. (Tennyson, speaking of a knight of the Round Table, the one who attained the Grail), his "strength is as the strength of ten because his heart is pure."

Check out his pages on the web and communicate your experiences.

If you are a member of the Sierra Club, or can join, he could use your help within the club to get them to oppose mountain biking. He calls the club's policy "ambivalent, due to some back-room machinations by mountain bikers."

WE SEE BY THE PAPERS

Over the years since the 1880s, the Zortman and Landusky mines in the Little Rocky Mountains of north-central Montana took about \$1,000,000,000 in gold and silver from the ground and put it in the pockets of Pegasus Gold Corporation. Beginning in the 1970s, Pegasus blew Spirit Mountain apart and doused the rubble heaps with a cyanide solution to dissolve out the gold. The process was adopted by a rash of mines in the 1980s, as gold prices spiked. When gold declined, Pegasus declared bankruptcy on its Spirit mines, retaining others elsewhere still profitable in Apollo Gold Inc.

The federal Bureau of Land Management says cleanup of Spirit will require \$33,500,000 more than the cleanup bond posted by Pegasus. Taxpayer expense.

Water poisoned by the mine will have to be treated forever to protect the surrounding countryside and the people of the Fort Belknap Indian Reservation — to whom Spirit Mountain was sacred.

The Indian Law Resource Center in Helena says "Mines all over the West are going to be facing this in coming years. This is just the beginning."

(The cyanide process was planned for the proposed mine above Goldmeyer Hot Springs, in the ridge dividing the Middle Fork Snoqualmie River from Burnt Boot Creek. Didn't quite happen. Never will, now. — By way, how much has the Forest Service spent, and how much will it spend, to clean up Railroad Creek, poisoned by the Holden mine?)

WE SEE BY THE PAPERS

The Fox is dead, at 70, October 3, 2001, in Aurora, Illinois. He led a dual existence as a middle-school science teacher and ecological saboteur, employing techniques later refined by left-left environmentalists.

In the late 1960s he was distressed to see dead ducks on the polluted Fox River. So he stopped up a sewer pipe that was spewing wastes from a plywood plant. "Nobody ever stuck up for that poor, mistreated stream," he told *Newsweek*. "So I decided to do something in its name."

Offended by a smoke stack of United States Steel, he climbed to the top and installed a metal cap, directing the smoke back down into the mill. He dumped 50 pounds of sewage in the reception room of a company that had spewed it into Lake Michigan. He left skunks on the doorsteps of company executives.

After state and federal laws were enacted to control pollution, he "went straight." His passion persists in a group named for him, Friends of the Fox.

Globe and Mail
December 10, 2001
By Jane Armstrong

Is Pristine B.C. on a Slippery Slope?

Motorized winter sports could destroy fabled backcountry, residents fear

VANCOUVER — British Columbia's fabled backcountry is open for business and the people who have lived in — and profited from — its untrammelled grandeur are not amused.

Making good on an election promise to spur economic development, the provisional Liberal government is chipping at a backlog of dozens of applications from tourism companies that aim to capitalize on B.C.'s many untouched mountaintops, river valleys and glacier-fed lakes.

Most of the new applications offer

motorized recreation, such as helicopter and caterpillar skiing and snowmobile and all-terrain vehicle trips.

PRIVATIZE AND RE-CREATE AND WIN-WIN

"Private wilderness playgrounds are the future for quality outdoor recreation."

— Terry L. Anderson, chief brain of the free-market Political Economy Research Center and Big Thinker for President Bush

"Private wilderness playgrounds are the future for quality outdoor recreation."

— *Backpacker Magazine* (the publisher, John Viahman, is an outspoken proponent of fee-demo and of elitist pay-to-play recreation.)

Wilderness by Reservation

William Altenberg, Jr. leases 24,000 acres in northern New Hampshire from

International Paper Company and offers hiking, biking, kayaking, and backcountry skiing to paying customers. He is building lodges, yurts, and trails.

His holdings, known as the "Phillips Brook tract," are managed for him by Timberland Trails, Inc., a 1995 subsidiary of his Mountain Recreation Inc., founded in 1992.

He is negotiating for other leases in western Pennsylvania, the Bitterroots of Montana and Idaho, and the Cascades of Washington, bringing his total to some 2,000,000 acres.

Mountain Recreation is a member of the American Recreation Coalition (of course) whose president, Derrick Crandall, is "simply delighted" by this new membership, as well as Cross Country Ski Areas Association, International Jet Sports Boating Association, and Personal Watercraft Industry Association.

Membership Application

Be part of the North Cascades Conservation Council's Advocacy of the North Cascades. Join the NCCC. Support the North Cascades Foundation. Help us help protect North Cascades wilderness from overuse and development.

NCCC membership dues (one year): \$10 low income/student; \$20 regular; \$25 family; \$50 Contributing; \$100 patron; \$1,000 sustaining. A one-time life membership dues payment is \$500. *The Wild Cascades*, published three times a year, is included with NCCC membership.

Please check the appropriate box(es):

- I wish membership in NCCC
The North Cascades Conservation Council (NCCC), formed in 1957, works through legislative, legal and public channels to protect the lands, waters, plants and wildlife of the North Cascades ecosystem. Non-tax-deductible, it is supported by dues and donations. A 501(c)4 organization.
- I wish to support NCF
The North Cascades Foundation (NCF) supports the NCCC's non-political legal and educational efforts. Donations are tax-deductible as a 501(c)3 organization.

This is a NCCC Membership NCCC Renewal Membership Gift NCCC \$ _____

This is a Donation to NCF NCF \$ _____

Total \$

Please cut, enclose check and mail form and check to: Name _____

NORTH CASCAD Address _____

CONSERVATION COUNCIL City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Membership Chair Phone _____

L. Zalesky
2433 Del Campo Dr.
Everett, WA 98208

Wenatchee National Forest Recreation and Wildlife Interactions Workshop May 11, 2002

A Recreation and Wildlife Interactions Workshop will be held at the Forest Supervisors Office in Wenatchee on May 11, 2002. The Okanogan and Wenatchee National Forests have completed an assessment of interactions between trail users and wildlife species. This study was done as part of the Goose-Maverick lawsuit. The assessment covers both motorized and non-motorized recreation uses including both summer and winter activities.

The objectives of this workshop are: (1) develop an understanding of the available science on the interactions between different kinds of recreational activities and wildlife, and (2) initiate proactive discussions among various user groups to identify creative approaches that address specific recreation/wildlife issues.

Signup is limited to 100 people. For more information call the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest at 509-662-4335.

Wenatchee National Forest says it will repeat the May 11 rec-wildlife session "if demand warrants."

Is There Still Public Access to Freedom of Information Act?

For the past four years, Wild Wilderness has been using the Freedom of Information Act to obtain materials on Partners Outdoors, where the Recreation Roundtable and the like and seven federal agencies (USFS, NPS, BLM, etc.) meet annually — *in secret* (there's a law against that, but what the heck) — to develop strategies to commercialize and privatize public lands.

This year, for the first time, the USFS has categorically refused to provide Wild Wilderness with ANYTHING. That Freedom of Information Act? Apparently repealed by the Florida coup d'etat.

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