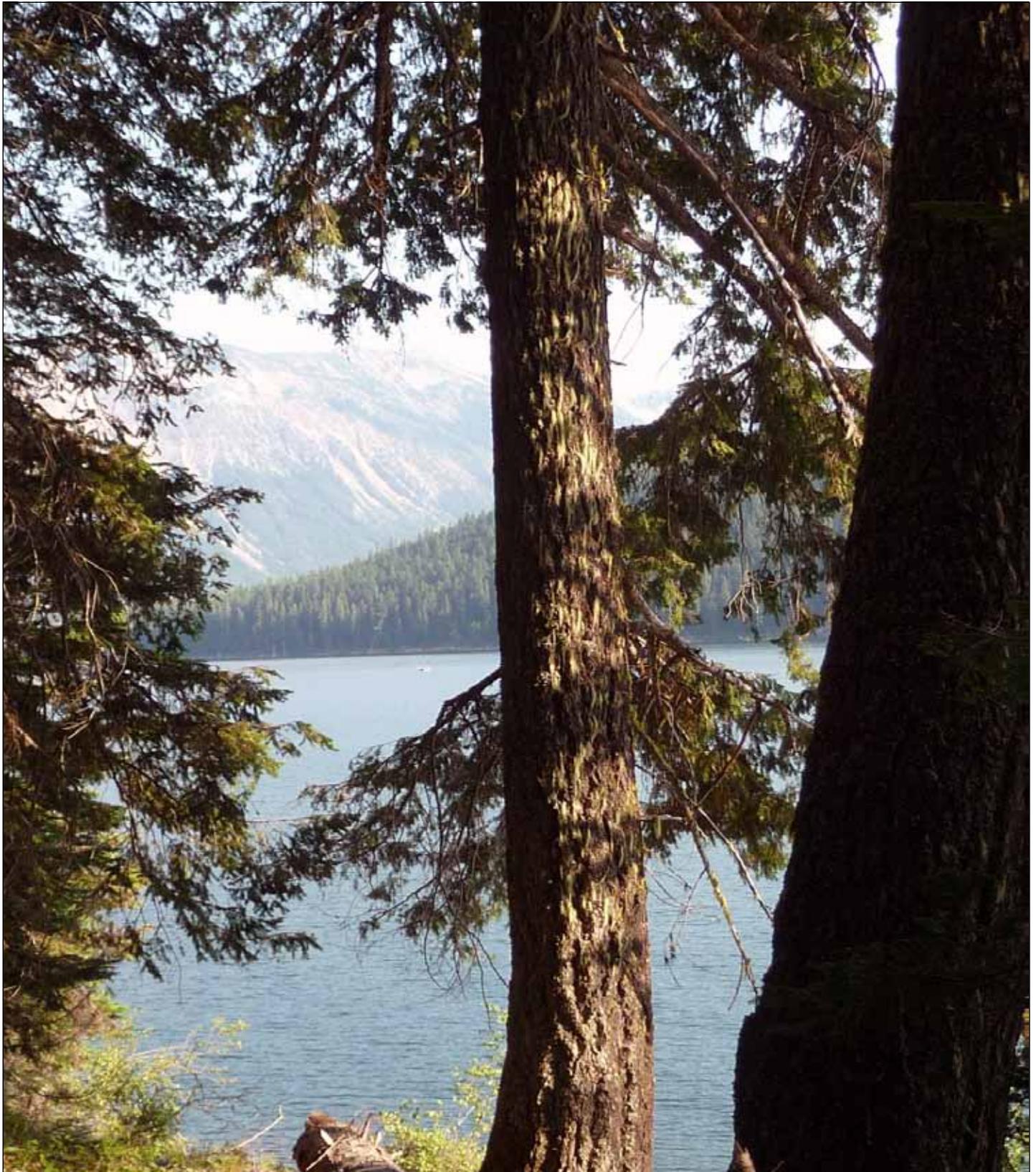

THE WILD CASCADES

THE JOURNAL OF THE NORTH CASCADES CONSERVATION COUNCIL

WINTER 2012



THE WILD CASCADES ■ Winter 2012

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COVER: Looking south across Bumping Lake toward Mt. Aix and Granite Creek area. — DAVID E. ORTMAN PHOTO

The Wild Cascades

Journal of the North Cascades Conservation Council

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THE NORTH CASCADES

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

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

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

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Founded in 1957
SEATTLE, WASHINGTON

The President's Report

Winter 2012

Elsewhere in this issue of *The Wild Cascades* you will find information outlining a basic change to the structure of the North Cascades Conservation Council. In a nutshell, the NCCC has spun off the American Alps Legacy Campaign into a separate organization called "American Alps." This new entity is composed of several supporting groups, of which NCCC is a primary member. Along with it went our Executive Director, Jim Davis.

My friends have asked me why we decided to have a completely independent organization "carry the ball" to complete the North Cascades National Park as originally envisioned more than 40 years ago. There were many reasons but the bottom line is that the Board of Directors felt this strategy was the most effective way to accomplish the goal.

Folks who joined NCCC as a result of our work to expand the Park might wonder how they can still be part of that effort. How does this decision affect our members?

Longtime and newer NCCC members have enthusiastically supported the Park expansion initiative. Many of you have contributed to the outreach effort by writing letters to the Editor and meeting with other groups and elected officials. Your effort is still required to make things happen. I am confident that the American Alps organization will keep you informed about ways to support the initiative. Through *The Wild Cascades* and our website, NCCC will also keep you updated on the initiative's progress.

Your continued financial support is also important. There are three ways to help the Park initiative. You can send checks directly made out to NCCC with an earmark for American Alps. Our treasurer will pass that contribution directly to American Alps. You can give to NCCC itself and be assured that NCCC will help support the American Alps at a sustainable level. (Don't forget that giving via our website is always an option.) Third, you can contribute directly to American Alps as they conduct their own program.

I urge all of you who care about our park and wilderness areas and the natural world in general to continue to be passionate about preserving and protecting what we care so much about. I like to think that the North Cascades Conservation Council is a good way to accomplish what needs to be done.



National Park advocates create new American Alps organization

This new organization will be able to focus its resources more effectively on the American Alps Legacy Proposal for the single purpose of Park expansion, while NCCC will continue its valuable watchdog role on all of the public lands in the North Cascades.

The American Alps Advisory Committee has prompted creation of a new conservation group (American Alps) to lead the campaign to expand the North Cascades National Park. The American Alps Legacy Proposal recommends adding more than 237,000 acres to the National Park and enhancing family recreation opportunities in the expanded Park. Proposal details and maps can be found on the campaign website at www.americanalps.org.

The Advisory Committee, comprising conservation leaders throughout the state and beyond, has recognized the importance of a single-purpose organization for leading the American Alps campaign. "This new organization, simply called American Alps, is in a better position to coordinate

the activities of the broad array of conservation groups, businesses, and individuals supporting the campaign," said Jim Wickwire, Advisory Committee Co-Chair.

Members of the new American Alps Board include Raelene Gold, Jim DiPeso, Polly Dyer, Morry Browne, Jim Davis, Gerry Cook, Don Bishop, and Peter Jackson. Members of the Advisory Committee include Brock Evans, Governor Dan Evans, Estella Leopold, Wyatt King, Art Kruckeberg, Polly Dyer, Peter Jackson,

Continued on page 5

Every peak and valley in this photo falls outside designated protection or recognition: Granite Creek trench, Swamp Creek, and Methow Mountains.

—TOM HAMMOND PHOTO

New American Alps organization *continued from page 4*

Mike McCloskey, John Miles, Peter Morrison, Gordon Orians, John Roskelley, Jim Whittaker, Jim Wickwire, and Norm Winn. More information on committee members can be viewed visiting the American Alps Advisory Committee webpage at www.americanalps.org/advisory/index.htm.

The North Cascades Conservation Council (NCCC) initiated the American Alps Legacy Project in 2008. Although NCCC spearheaded creation of the North Cascades National Park in 1968, the organization's mission has expanded during the past four decades into a watchdog role in the Park and surrounding public lands (mainly National Park, National Forest and State DNR forest lands), focused on land management planning, timber sales, hydropower development, mining, road management, and off-road vehicles. "This new American Alps organization will be able to focus its resources more effectively on the American Alps Legacy Proposal for the single purpose of Park expansion, while NCCC will continue its valuable watchdog role on all of the public lands in the North Cascades," said Peter Jackson, Advisory Committee Co-Chair.

Supporters of the American Alps Legacy Proposal highlight the conservation, recreation, and economic benefits of expanding the North Cascades National Park.

"Protecting the habitats of low elevation and wide ranging species will enhance biodiversity conservation in the North Cascades," said Gordon Orians, Advisory Committee member.

Adding low-elevation trails and expanding camping opportunities will make the Park more accessible to families with young children. An economic study conducted by Powell and Associates has shown that expanding the North Cascades National Park, including iconic sites such as Liberty Bell, and enhancing family recreation opportunities will increase visitation to the Park and create more than 1,000 new jobs in communities surrounding the Park.

"It is time to complete the conservation vision for the North Cascades National Park," said Polly Dyer, American Alps Board member.

Follow the progress of the American Alps Legacy Proposal:

Visit www.americanalps.org
"Like" American Alps on Facebook, at www.facebook.com/AmericanAlps

Did you know...?

The Wild Cascades is also published in a full-color PDF format on our website.

Visit our website at www.northcascades.org and click on *The Wild Cascades* to view the current issue (released a few weeks after you get your paper copy), and browse back issues, all in "living color"!

Ross Lake planning

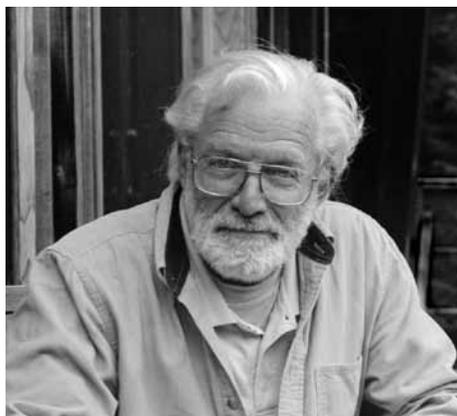
The National Park Service has completed its lengthy planning process for Ross Lake National Recreation Area. Here are some of the highlights, modified from the NPS Press release:

- Change the name of Ross Lake National Recreation Area to North Cascades National Recreation Area, which would require Congressional legislation.
- Recommend designation of the North Cascades Highway as a National Scenic Byway.
- Recommend Wild and Scenic River designation of Goodell Creek, Newhalem Creek, and the Skagit River from the Gorge Powerhouse in Newhalem to the western boundary of Ross Lake NRA.
- **Convert 3,559 acres of Thunder Creek Potential Wilderness Area to designated wilderness, as authorized in the Washington Park Wilderness Act of 1988.**
- **Airshed:** Pursue redesignation of the Class II Airshed within Ross Lake NRA to a Class I Airshed. (An airshed is a geographic boundary for air quality standards.)
- **Grizzly Bear Management:** Retain grizzly bear habitat in large, contiguous, isolated blocks, and assess any new development to ensure high-quality grizzly bear habitat would not be compromised.
- **Boating:** Require the exclusive use of four-stroke engines, direct-injection two-stroke engines, or equivalent technology for all boats in the NRA by 2015.
- **Seaplanes:** Institute noise abatement procedures for seaplanes and establish a long-term acoustic monitoring program.
- **Thornton Lakes Road:** Close the upper one-mile segment of the Thornton Lakes Road to comply with Wilderness boundary.
- **Ross Lake Resort:** Permit Ross Lake Resort to run two water taxis on Ross Lake, and allow the Resort to expand by ten percent.

The full text of this document is available in two volumes, CD and online versions (www.nps.gov/noca/parkmgmt/rlna-gmp.htm) from North Cascades National Park (NOCA).

NCCC board members bring skills, passion to their work

Part Three in an ongoing series highlighting our newer (and, now and then, longtime) board members.



Bruce Barnbaum

After obtaining a BA and MA in mathematics from UCLA ('65 and '67, respectively) board member Bruce Barnbaum spent three years working as a computer programmer and math analyst in the defense industry. In 1970, he made an abrupt career change into photography and environmental activism. Active in the Sierra Club, he was chairman of the Angeles Chapter (Los Angeles and Orange County, the club's largest chapter) Camera Committee in the early to mid-1970s, earning the Club's Ansel Adams Award for Photography and Conservation in 1974. He also served on the Executive Committee of the Angeles Chapter and the Regional Conservation Committee. After moving to Washington in 1989, he became a board member of NCCC and a founding member and chair of the Stillaguamish Citizens' Alliance. He is also on the board of the Mountain Loop Conservancy.

Barnbaum is the author of five photography books: the monograph *Visual Symphony* (1986), the monographs *Tone Poems, Book 1* (2002) and *Tone Poems, Book 2* (2005); a textbook, *The Art of Photography* (2010), which was the top-selling photography book on Amazon.com for many months; and *Plateaus and Canyons* (2011). Nationally, internationally, and in his home/studio in Granite Falls, Bruce teaches Photographic Arts Workshops, and is frequently a guest instructor in other workshops and international photography festivals.



Ed Henderson

Board member Ed Henderson is a retired civil engineer with professional experience in power plant and road construction. He joined the Sierra Club 40 years ago when the power company he worked for would not even consider relocating a planned power line to avoid a grove of old-growth live oak trees. Since moving to the Pacific Northwest in 1980, Ed has enjoyed many of the outdoor activities our region affords. He climbs, backpacks and skis in the Cascades and Olympics. His activities give him an appreciation of the natural beauty of this area and he works to protect old-growth forest, endangered species, and to encourage responsible recreation access. Active for many years in the Mountaineers, he volunteered as an activity leader and instructor and served on the board of trustees and as president.

For many years Ed was the Mountaineers' representative to the Northwest Energy Coalition (NVEC). His professional background in power construction and experience with public power policy gained with the NVEC gives him insight into the consequences of energy production and use and the potential environmental benefits of alternatives

sources such as renewable generation and conservation. He is working to reduce the climate impact of energy production and use. He writes extensively, meets with various agency officials and testifies frequently on all of these issues. Ed favors a balanced approach to the protection and preservation of the North Cascade wilderness. He joined the NCCC board in 2012.

Dave LeBlanc

Growing up in the bayou country of rural southwest Louisiana, Dave LeBlanc observed both its lush natural beauty as well as the effects of the destructive environmental practices of the petroleum industry. When graduate school brought him to Washington in the 1960s, he was immediately entranced by the mountains and waters. A boatbuilder for 40 years who retired in 2010, Dave is married with grown children. He and his family have enjoyed many years of hiking, climbing, and sailing throughout the Northwest.

At various times a member of the Sierra Club, the Wilderness Society, and the Washington Wilderness Coalition, Dave joined The Mountaineers in 1975 and has served as member and chair of the Climbing Committee, chair of Recreation Resources, member of the Board of Trustees, chair of the Board Task Force on Role of Conservation, member of the Wilderness Ethics Policy committee, member of the Conservation Executive Committee, and member of the Foundation Board's Grant Screening Committee. All that and Climb Leader of the Year in 1994! He joined the NCCC board in 2010.





Sperry Peak and the forested headwaters of the South Fork Stillaguamish River sport a lovely winter coat.
— TOM HAMMOND PHOTO

Board members continued



TOM HAMMOND PHOTO

Athena Pangan-Hammond

Born in Manila, Philippines, Athena Pangan-Hammond was drawn to the North Cascades by its dramatic landscape and rugged peaks. An accountant with an MBA and degrees in Accounting, History, and Political Science, she loves snowshoeing and cross-country skiing during the

winter, hiking in the summer and fall, and watching avalanches in the spring. Joining the NCCC and serving on its board gives her the opportunity to help preserve the landscape she loves so she can continue her favorite activities. She began serving on the board in 2011.

DNR trail planning process effort begins

by Mike Town

On February 1, the Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) started a recreation planning process for 53,000 acres of state lands it manages along the “Snoqualmie Corridor” from Issaquah to North Bend. The acreage of DNR public lands in the area has grown substantially in recent years, with large acquisitions via land exchanges and purchases in the Middle Fork Snoqualmie and Raging River valleys near North Bend.

With driving access to many areas on the Mt. Baker Snoqualmie National Forest getting more difficult due to decaying logging roads, and fuel prices likely to climb, closer-in areas such as the DNR Snoqualmie Corridor will become more and more important in years ahead. Fortunately, there is great scope for new trail development in many areas. Granite Creek, a tributary of the Middle Fork Snoqualmie, will be a likely focus for new trails, along with the Raging River.

The Raging River comprises the country on the “back side” of Rattlesnake Ridge, the long prominent mountain southwest of North Bend. The “back side” of Rattlesnake is actually the front side in terms of sun exposure, and new trails for hikers, horses and bicycles could ascend its southwest facing slopes up to broad views of the Snoqualmie valley and the Cascades from its long ridgetop. There are opportunities for longer loop trails, as well as connections to existing trails on the North Bend side of Rattlesnake.

NCCC plans to be closely involved in the planning process, and looks forward to working with DNR and other conservation and recreation groups to craft a good plan for this important area of nearby public lands.

Mike Town has been selected by DNR to participate as a member of the Snoqualmie Corridor Planning Committee and looks forward to representing NCCC in that effort.

A conversation with Jan Henderson

Recently retired Forest Ecologist for Mt. Baker Snoqualmie and Olympic National Forests

Few people have had such an interesting career in the outdoors as Jan Henderson, recently retired Forest Ecologist for the Mt. Baker Snoqualmie and Olympic National Forests. Henderson's work took him into obscure and remote places of both forests, where he researched and mapped the ages of stands and reconstructed the ebb and flow of changing climates and species distributions going back thousands of years. He probably knows more about the forests of northwestern Washington than anyone else, and his body of work is fascinating.



Jan Henderson at work counting rings from an Alaska yellow cedar cut near Three Peaks in the western Olympics, estimated age 1500 years.

questions. What is the pattern of vegetation across the landscape? Why is it the way it is? And how did it get that way? The overall pattern of vegetation in a landscape is primarily driven by the pattern of the different environmental factors, such as precipitation, temperature, patterns of soil, snow, aspect and cold air drainage etc. In addition the characteristics of vegetation depend on how old the forests (or non-forest communities) are. In the PNW, the origination of forests can usually be traced back to the time of the last stand-replacing fire.

Old forests look and act differently from

TWC: Jan, thanks for taking the time to talk with us. Many Wild Cascades readers have a great interest in your work. Can you tell us just a bit about the path that led you to become Forest Ecologist?

JH: I grew up in Seattle and spent a lot of my early years on the salt water. In 1960, some friends asked me if I wanted to hike to a mountain lake to go fishing. With borrowed pack and sleeping bag, we hiked the nine miles into Lake Stuart in the Icicle. I was hooked. My interests soon changed away from fish in the lakes to the forests we hiked through or the peaks and views nearby. In college I pursued forestry, as the closest field to my interests. As a senior I took a job in a paleobotany lab, and began studying forest ecology and then botany, eventually doing my dissertation on the ecology of subalpine meadows at Mt. Rainier.

A professor's job at Utah State took me out of the area but allowed me to pursue intellectual interests in vegetation, climate and forest management. When a job opportunity surfaced that would take me back to the Seattle area and into

the mountains, I packed up and moved back. My job was to inventory, classify and describe the vegetation of the Olympic and Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forests for the purposes of helping guide the management of these forests based on the concept of potential natural vegetation. I had become all too aware that fellow faculty members spent minimum time in the field and maximum time squeezing as many papers out of their few field plots as possible. My new job required maximum time in the field and the rest analyzing and interpreting the data. That suited me and my personal interest to learn as much as I could about the ecology of Northwest Washington.

TWC: One part of your work that tree buggers find of great interest is "stand origination date" mapping and the reconstruction of ancient fire histories across the forests. Can you tell us about that, and what led you to it?

JH: The process of learning about the ecology of the Olympic and Mt Baker-Snoqualmie NFs boiled down to just a few

young forests, and I wanted to know the age (at least in a relative time frame) of the different forests and to try to determine which of their characteristics were due to the environment and which were due to age. In the course of taking data on species composition, elevation, site and location, we took data on tree ages and heights. Along with doing tree-ring counts to determine ages of trees, we also recorded information on rates of growth during different decades and growth anomalies that could be due to fire or other disturbance. By analyzing these data we were able to map the extent of forests of different ages, and from that plus fire scars and growth anomalies we were able to map not only the extents of current stand ages but to interpret the probable extents of previous large, stand-replacing fires.

The maps of these big fires indicated that a large fire throughout NW Washington in or about the year 1701 burned somewhere between three and 10 million acres. Much of it was mapped off of national forests in the Puget Trough. This was an interpretation of the measured patterns and a process of "connecting the

dots” between the Cascades and Olympics. Other times of large fires were about 1508 and 1308, although the 1308 date may have been simply the end of a long and active burning period that characterized the Medieval Warm Period in western Washington. Other small fires were also identified, but these three were by far the most significant. It is most interesting to me that all three occurred during periods when the climate is believed to have been quite a bit cooler, and probably also drier.

One aspect of the vegetation that can be interpreted from such data is based on the species composition that is represented in each of these three major age classes. The older forests show that they had to have started with a large component of Douglas-fir, even if they are now in what is the cool moist Pacific silver fir zone. Younger forests show fewer Douglas-firs in the same zone, indicating that the climate must have become either wetter or colder (or both!) over this period of time.

TWC: You have put considerable effort into researching and reconstructing the climate history of the Northwest and its continuing evolution. Some of your findings run counter to mainstream thinking. Where do you think the climate here seems to be heading?

JH: Two things are virtually certain about vegetation of this area (and most other areas as well). First, every place in the landscape is different. I have never found two places (sites or sample plots) that I would be willing to say were “the same” ecologically. Second, every time period has also been different. Reconstruction of climate and vegetation history indicates that climate is always changing. I believe this is true at any time scale one wishes to use. If this belief is true, then there is every reason to believe that it will continue to change in the future, and that whatever this change brings will be something new.

Reconstruction of climate and vegetation history indicates that climate is always changing.

The causes of such climate change are many. Change in atmospheric and oceanic concentrations of CO₂ are only one part of the history of that change. At times in

the past, changes in CO₂ may have had great effects on climate and at other times maybe not much at all. I believe the Sun has the major effect on Earth’s climate and will continue to do so. The Sun and its relationship to the Earth, too, is always changing. Most people believe the great Ice Ages of the Pleistocene were caused primarily by changes in Earth’s tilt relative to the Sun and its changes in orbit around the Sun. Many people believe the recurring major cycle of “Little Ice Ages” every 1000 to 1500 years is due to solar effects as well.

Based on this, I believe that climate of the PNW will likely be cooling in the next decade or so and maybe for several decades before it turns warmer again. The Pacific Decadal Oscillation is turning cooler. The Sun appears to be entering another quiet phase with low sunspot numbers and low electro- and geomagnetic energy. The short-term La Niña of the last two years will pass quickly. However, in the long run the proportion of El Niños and La Niñas may be related to whether a particular decade is “warm” or “cool.” If the Sun continues to become less active (like it was during even minor “Little Ice Age” events) we could see a more prolonged cooling in the near future. In the last decade or two there has been a measurable downward trend in temperature, at least here in the northwestern US, that seems to support these predictions. We won’t know, except in hindsight, whether this is just another short-term variation due to unknown causes or a more significant event.

TWC: Based on what you know about the way west-side forests have changed over the last thousand years in response to climate shifts, what do you think about the idea that “active management” is needed to help forests respond to prospective climate change? Is such a thing possible?

JH: If we knew what would be different about climate in the future, we’d have a chance of prescribing some “active management” to anticipate such changes, but we don’t. I believe there are three flawed assumptions. First, regarding climate change itself, we don’t know the magnitude of any future changes in temperature or precipitation; we don’t even know whether they’ll increase or decrease. And we clearly can’t separate natural climate changes from man-caused ones. Second, we don’t have enough research or live experience with non-classical silviculture to prescribe with any assurance the outcome of these “active management” treatments.

Consider how poorly we were able to predict the outcomes of recent “thinning.” Third, we don’t know enough about the ecology of different species to make a defensible prescription for “moving” species into anticipated future climates. I think the only defensible “active management” is to provide for a diversity of species within different stands or communities, and to provide for sufficient growing stock to weather future disturbances like wind or ice storms.

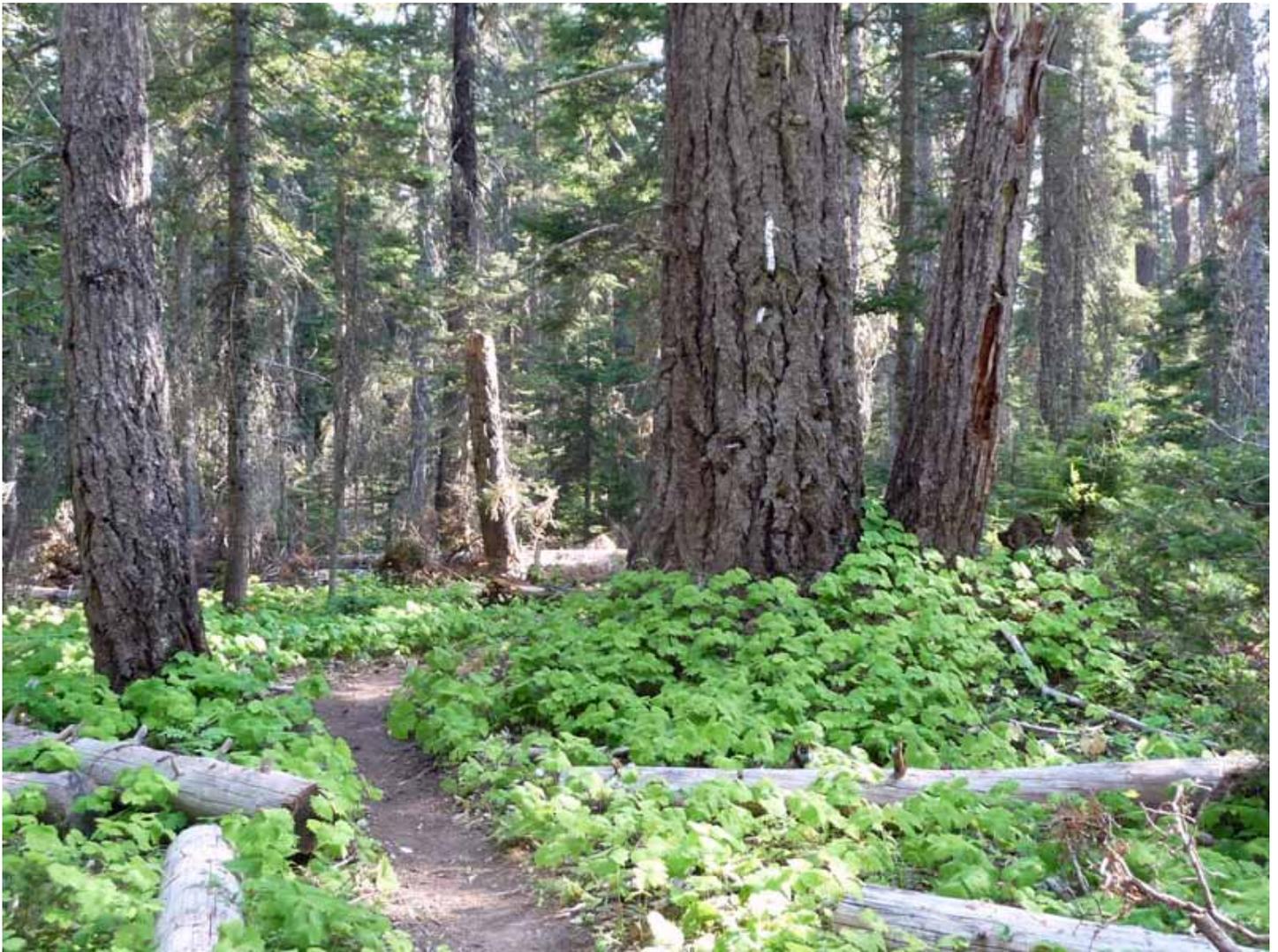
I believe we need to manage to conserve future alternatives rather than to target a particular future condition or climate.

Considering that climate is changing (including changes in CO₂ concentration in the atmosphere); has always been changing and will continue to change; one has to wonder if we have a very good idea about what a projected future condition might really look like. The presence of elevated CO₂ levels alone would certainly alter the successional development of any contemporary forests by increasing growth and biomass, plus inter- and intra-species competition, and would have to be incorporated into any pre-treatment analysis.

The wide range of possible future climate conditions here in NW Washington makes it virtually impossible to find a single good future target. If a warmer scenario gives us a target, what if the next 50 years are cooler? I believe that possibility is very real and should not be discounted. What about 100, 200, or 300 years from now? I believe it is almost certain that conditions then will be something other than what we can predict now!

Pacific Northwest species have survived greater magnitudes of change than are being predicted. They have a built-in genetic code that has evolved in the face of sudden and great changes in temperature, snow, precipitation, fog and wind. We need to give them more credit! I believe we need to manage to conserve future alternatives rather than to target a particular future condition or climate.

Look for Part Two of this interview in the Spring 2012 issue of The Wild Cascades.



A walk around Bumping Lake

By Rick McGuire

Regular readers of *The Wild Cascades* will be familiar with Bumping Lake, as previous issues have looked at the flooding threat to some of the most impressive ancient forests surviving anywhere in the Cascades [*Bumping Lake ancient forest: One of a kind*, Brock Evans, Summer/Fall 2010; *Flooding threatens old growth forest at Bumping Lake*, Marc Bardsley, Winter 2010]. The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation has long wanted to construct a new dam at Bumping Lake downstream of an existing small dam to store more water for Yakima Valley agribusiness. A new dam would flood and destroy up to 1000 acres of old-growth forests surrounding the lake, forests that are all the more unusual for growing on mostly flat ground. (Most surviving old-growth forest is found on

steeply sloping ground, where logging was difficult.)

The forests around Bumping Lake were a favorite of U.S. Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas, native of Yakima and author of many books, including *Of Men and Mountains*, in which he writes about the Bumping Lake country and its forests at some length. The “Judge,” as he was referred to locally, had a cabin at Goose Prairie just below Bumping. He spent many of what he called the best days of his life in the country around and above Bumping Lake.

When John Osborn, longtime conservation activist from Spokane, and Brock Evans, legendary veteran of more conservation battles than anyone in the Northwest, put together an outing to Bumping Lake in early September 2011, I had to go. Never

having spent much time there, I had to see for myself just what is at stake.

On the weekend after Labor Day, the weather was absolutely perfect. Perfect, as in blue skies, temperatures that were warm but not hot day and night, and no bugs. It seemed as though Nature was determined to make up to us for having failed to deliver a summer, and Bumping Lake seemed like the perfect place to enjoy it. The lake sits in a big, broad valley, with high mountains in every direction, but standing far enough back so as not to press in like they do in some other places. It feels spacious and expansive. The top few thousand feet of Mt. Rainier can be

Bumping Lake ancient forest.

— DAVID E. ORTMAN PHOTO

seen above western ridges from the east end of the lake.

The lake itself is big, but not overwhelmingly so. The original Bumping Lake was modestly expanded by the Bureau of Reclamation with an earthfill dam in 1910, creating 33,700 acre feet of water storage. While that dam did flood out some forest, most of the valley escaped inundation. It was surprising to me just how nice it looked. Parts of the lake shoreline are made ugly by stumps, and although the lake level fluctuates, it doesn't seem to do so as much as most other reservoirs. One would expect to see an irrigation reservoir drawn way down in September, with endless stumps and mudflats, but if we were seeing Bumping Lake in its ugly phase, it wasn't all that bad. Perhaps the cool wet summer helped. Most of the forest surrounding it is still there – for now.

And that forest was what had drawn us there. After a warm moonlit Friday night when John Osborn and I were the only arrivals, Saturday dawned perfectly clear. People began trickling in, and it was time to renew old acquaintances and make new ones, including Sierra Club people who

have been working on eastern Washington water issues. The forests were calling, but so was a pleasantly slow and sunny morning of conversation. As lunchtime rolled around, it was time to get a pack on and set about circumnavigating Bumping Lake.

The easiest way to see the forests at Bumping is to follow the trail that skirts its northern shore, a route that had been scouted out a week or two earlier by Doyle McClure, who was back again for the campout. That was the objective for everyone but me. I decided to follow the southern shore, with vague thoughts of zigzagging along so as to see as much of the to-be-inundated forests as possible. I would go west along the south side of the lake, cross the river at its head, and find the north side trail and meet the others for the eastbound return, going around the lake clockwise.

The gentlest topography in the Bumping valley is along part of the south side of the lake, and at its head—the two places that will see the most forest lost if the dam is raised. A road runs south of the lake, but far back from the shoreline except at the eastern end, near the dam and camp-

ground. Walking southwest out of the campground, I was suddenly in forest that had never been logged.

I could have followed the shoreline where the drawdown made the going easy except in places where stumps and wood debris were thick. But I was here to see the forests that will be lost, so I gradually trended farther away from the lake as I walked west. The Bumping forests are of the “mid-Cascade” variety, sometimes called “mesic,” not very wet but not very dry. It seems to be too far west, or too wet, for ponderosa pine, but just about every other tree species to be found in the Cascades seemed to be there, including some very stately white pines, along with lodgepole pines in gravelly, well-drained places.

But it was the western larches that caught my attention in the area between

Continued on page 12

Sierra Club/NCCC Outing to Bumping Lake, September 2011.

— MICHAEL ORTMAN PHOTO



A walk around Bumping Lake

Continued from page 13



*Bumping Lake
red ant mound.*
— DAVID E.
ORTMAN PHOTO

the campground and Deep Creek, a stream that enters the lake from the south. Tall and straight, with light-colored, corrugated bark, these deciduous conifers never fail to impress. Their needles were a bright summer green, probably still six weeks or more away from turning golden. Larches make for a very bright and open forest. Something about the way they filter the sun through their sparse, light green foliage gives the light a certain note not seen in any other kind of forest. Larches tend to be uncommon in the Cascades, with their main stronghold in the interior ranges of Idaho, western Montana and B.C. The Eurasian species grows in Siberia and around Lake Baikal across enormous areas referred to by Russians with a special word meaning “light-filled forest.”

The Bumping Lake forests were all of that, and delightfully easy to walk through. Dotted among the larches and pines were occasional big Douglas firs, notably larger and older looking than their companions, with large limbs seen only on trees several centuries old. Apparently they were the survivors of the last forest fire here, after which more pines and larches than Douglas fir grew back in the burned areas, although some younger Douglas firs looked to be the same age as the larches. The big old Douglas firs survived the last fire, but they won't survive the Bureau of Reclamation and its “Yakima Work Group” if they get their way.

The walking was enjoyably straightforward, and I started to think that my route would be no big deal at all. That started to change as the gravelly, well-drained low bench I was on gradually dropped

westwards toward Deep Creek. The ground started to look soggy and kept getting wetter until there was no pretending that I was in anything but a swamp. Little ponds were everywhere, with lots of semi-open glades full of marsh grasses. Giant skunk cabbage leaves looked remarkably well preserved for September, and the whole place seemed to still be springlike, perhaps a product of 2011's late summer. Tussocky little islands of slightly higher ground alternated with wet grass, mud, and water.

The larches and Douglas firs were left behind for western and mountain hemlocks and grand firs on the higher bits of ground, and Alaska cedars and cottonwoods everywhere. It was strange to see Alaska or yellow cedar here, since it is normally found in colder, more northerly places. But by some quirk of biology they seem to be common in some areas on the eastern side of the South Cascades, including Fifes Peaks to the north of Bumping where they form almost pure forests in spots. There was no shortage of them here, and they filled the role of swamp cedars. I later noticed that there were some on the uplands also, and that there were no western red cedars to be seen anywhere.

For a while I tried to stay dry, taking a convoluted route from tussock to tussock. But the tussocks grew fewer and the muck more plentiful, and soon I was forced to admit that I would have to give up the idea of dry feet if I hoped to make it through. Fortunately I was wearing light sneakers, not heavy boots, so it was no big deal to accept the inevitable and plunge in. The

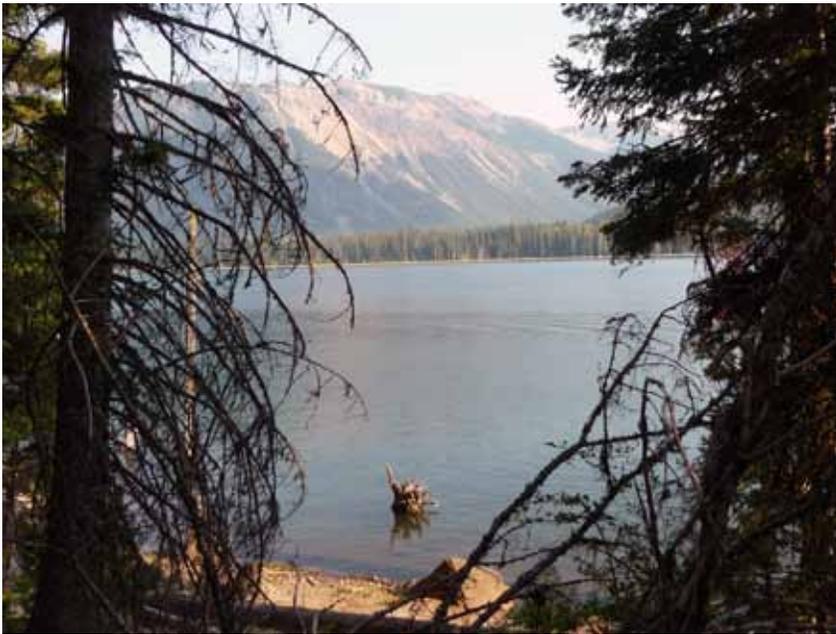
map I had studied one back at the campground had given little hint of just how much swamp and swampy forest exists on the south side of Bumping. I found out that the swampy area is big, and traversed not just by Deep Creek and its branches but two other creeks as well.

As I moved westward, the terrain changed from lightly to heavily forested, dominated by tall, straight grand firs and hemlocks. This was real primeval swamp forest, dark and mysterious, difficult to traverse, a place where you wouldn't see another soul from one year to the next. It might even be called forbidding. The going was slow but the only choice was to keep at it. It was easy to think I was in a far bigger wild area than was really the case, and easy to imagine how the vast swampy forests of Ukraine and Russia had sheltered partisans from the Nazis for years. For Washington state in the 21st century, this is about as wild as it gets, and if there is any comparable area of such diverse old-growth forest on flat land in the Cascades, I have never found it in decades of looking.

The map had shown hills not far to the west, and I had seen them when setting out from the campground. But these dark, damp forests seemed to go on endlessly across this flat ground. Where were the hills? Finally I was able to see dimly through the trees to a slope ahead, with Granite Creek flowing along its base. If the dam is raised these unknown forests will be no more and the expanded Bumping Lake will lap at the foot of this hill.

It was a relief to be back on solid, well-drained, easy-to-walk ground. Although it meant leaving the inundation zone, it seemed wiser to go over the hills and find and follow the closed road for a ways rather than traverse the steep north side of the hills above the lakeshore, at least if I wanted to get back before dark. So up I went, out of the gloom and back into open forest of pine, larch, and Douglas fir. I soon found the narrow road, and in 30 minutes probably covered more distance than in three hours through the swampy forests below.

Soon I reached the end of the road and a trailhead parking area. Here I could follow the trail down to the Bumping River and presumably find a bridge across it before the junction with the north shore trail. Or I could save a lot of distance by heading off trail straight northwest and dropping directly down to where the river flowed into the lake. I chose the direct route.



Bumping Lake.

— DAVID E. ORTMAN PHOTO

A very pleasant forest stretched down the slope. Part way down was a talus area in which I found the biggest tree I had seen yet, a gigantic Douglas fir probably eight to nine feet in diameter. It was obviously much older than the surrounding old-growth forest, and evidence of how talus slopes often shelter trees from fires that burn up everything in continuous forests. Farther down I came upon a long abandoned hunting camp on a bluff above the extensive grassy flats where the river enters the lake, no doubt a good spot from which to fire on animals drawn to the plentiful forage below.

William O. Douglas spent many of the best days of his life in the country around Bumping Lake.

From there I was quickly out onto the large grassy and willowy delta of the Bumping River. It seemed, much wilder than I had expected, and if it had been in British Columbia I would have been on high alert for grizzly bears. The fast-flowing river boiled up to about knee level as I crossed. I then found my way through some tall slender Englemann spruce and into the large forested flats at the head of the lake.

These flats, along with the Deep Creek area, are where the most forest will be lost if the dam is raised. Trees in this

part looked to be maybe 150 to 200 years old, a stage sometimes called “young old growth.” Forests around this age have lots of stems, three to four feet in diameter, all competing for space and light. Trees are tall but do not yet have the large limbs that older trees develop. The ground seemed sandy and gravelly, and I began to find Douglas firs once away from the cold-air drainage channel of the river. I would have explored more upstream, but the hour was getting late and the shadows long. So I reluctantly set out to find the north shore trail, and was on it within ten minutes of crossing the river. Heading east I soon ran into Don Parks and John Osborn, who were just turning around to head back. So eastward we went along the north shore trail, which traverses mostly gentle slopes not far above the lake, winding in and out of shallow draws. Most of the forest is 200-or-so-year-old trees like that at the head of the lake, with occasional older individuals on talus slopes where they escaped whatever fire it was that burned the area two centuries ago. We also passed a number of large anthills.

Soon we ran into more of our fellow campers and a pleasant walk out was enjoyed by all. As the sun dropped into the west, views occasionally opened up south across the lake toward Mount Aix. I recalled the first time I had met Don over 30 years before, when he had been speaking about what a mistake it would be to allow designation of a Mt. Aix Wilderness cut off and separate from the then-

proposed Cougar Lakes Wilderness. As we walked out and looked across the water to Mt. Aix in the beautiful late light we could reflect that it was safely part of the William O. Douglas Wilderness. We could also see across to the tall treetops of the Deep Creek swamp forests I had traversed earlier, which are very much outside the Wilderness and in great jeopardy.

We were soon back where everyone had parked. The sun was gone by the time we passed by an inviting-looking swimming hole near the dam spillway, taking with it the allure of jumping in. Back at the campground it was another perfect evening, with a nearly full moon again. Tree huggers always talk shop, and it was a real treat to be able sit around the fire and do that with Brock Evans, David Ortman and everyone else until a late hour.

As I drove back through Goose Prairie the next day, I wondered where Judge Douglas’ cabin was. I also wondered what he would think of the conservation organizations such as the Wilderness Society, started by his contemporaries and acquaintances, who now seem committed to signing on to a deal to build a new dam downstream from the existing one, increasing the storage capacity of Bumping from 33,700 to 191,000 acre feet and flooding the forests he loved. Would he think it wise to sign them away in exchange for promises from big irrigators to conserve water, but only if they are given more? Would he agree with the employees of American Rivers and the National Wildlife Federation about the desirability of trading away the forests at Bumping in exchange for promises to build fish ladders elsewhere in the Yakima watershed sometime in the future if there is money available? Or for ill defined “protection” for lands in the Teanaway River basin of Kittitas County, “protection” that now includes large new National Recreation Areas for off-road vehicles?

The agribusiness interests of the Yakima valley have long wanted to expand Bumping Lake to get yet more taxpayer-subsidized water. As long as the Judge was alive, they weren’t able to. He’s no longer around, but at least it’s a comfort that he isn’t seeing the groups that once worked so hard to protect ancient forests and save wild places like the forests at Bumping Lake now spending their time coming up with reasons why they should be traded away and drowned. As I left, I also wondered if it would not have been better for me to have stayed home, and stayed ignorant of the forests at Bumping. For better or worse, it was too late for that now.

The Bumping Lake tradeaway

By Rick McGuire

Over two years ago, the Bureau of Reclamation and Washington Department of Ecology established an informal “work-group” made up of five Yakima irrigation districts, Yakima counties and cities, state and Federal resource agencies, the Yakama Indian Tribe, a water storage development group, and one environmental organization. This group has signed on to a Yakima Basin Integrated Water Resource Management Plan that would seal the doom of the splendid old forests around Bumping Lake.

While a growing coalition of local, regional and national environmental/conservation organizations have come together to save the existing ancient forests around Bumping Lake, a few conservation organizations have been meeting with Yakima irrigators and other members of the Work Group to lobby for an enlarged dam at Bumping in return for a “package” of supposed protections for other public and private lands in the Teanaway River basin of Kittitas County. These groups say that and other parts of the agreement make it worthwhile to trade away the ancient forests at Bumping Lake for a new dam.

It’s worth keeping in mind that first and foremost, the damming of Bumping would be a gift of public money to provide yet more subsidized water to Yakima agribusiness, which already has plenty, but will never have enough. And this entire “Yakima Basin Plan” is just a plan. It makes no laws and appropriates no money, even though the total costs would be in the multi-billions, almost all of it for new dams (Bumping and Wymer) for the irrigators. It does not bind or obligate Congress in any way. It will be up to each participant to get the appropriations for their part, even if they might think otherwise. Any idea that Congress will quickly and fully fund all or

any part of the plan can only be described as naïve. And any notion that the green groups will have power equal to the BuRec and the irrigators in pulling down dollars is even more naïve.

In a budgetary environment where the Federal debt grows by \$248 million per

getting money for the things they want for themselves.

Hopes for getting the various mitigation measures are wishful thinking. Nevertheless, keeping in mind that this is an exercise in faith-based thinking by people who have a lot to learn about politics, it’s worth

looking at these various items for which some seem to think it worthwhile to trade away the forests at Bumping Lake.

The following list can be found in a December 21, 2011 blog article by American Rivers’ representative on the Yakima work group, which can be found on the American Rivers website (www.am-rivers.org) by searching for “Bumping Lake.” Since the writer is the “official” and only representative of the groups who are defending the plan, we can probably assume he speaks for all of them.

“Fish passage into the high-elevation Cascade Mountain spawning habitat for the first time since headwater storage dams were built a century ago”

NCCC response: This means fish ladders, in hopes of bringing back anadromous fish to the

reservoirs on the upper Yakima (Keechelus, Kachess and Cle Elum,) and on southern tributaries (Rimrock and Bumping,) and possibly a few other places.

Likely fish ladders would be better to have than not. However, any fish coming up the Columbia to the Yakima must navigate past Bonneville, John Day, The Dalles and McNary dams. At best, fish ladders succeed in letting only a small percentage of the fish get past. So, by the time fish travel up the Columbia to the Yakima, they are a small percentage of a small percentage, and so on. Fish ladders tend to work best on rivers where there is only one dam, and without big, slack water and predator-filled reservoirs like the Columbia.



Windy Pass biker descending motorcycle run in North Fork Taneum Trail. If the Yakima Work Group plan is adopted, we could see further such destruction guaranteed on tens of thousands of acres in the Wenatchee National Forest.

—KARL FORSGAARD PHOTO

hour, even Yakima agribusiness may not have enough political pull to secure the one half to three quarters of a billion dollars it would take for the new Bumping dam alone. And the dam’s chances are far better than the chances of the environmental groups getting money for the fish ladders at existing BuRec Yakima dams and other things that have been put in the plan to get their signature. The irrigators and BuRec will be giving their approval to the “mitigation” measures, but once they have the greens’ approval for the Bumping dam, they will have gotten what they want. It seems highly doubtful that they will expend much political capital to get funding for those other measures. After all, they will have difficulties enough just

Fish ladders are expensive to construct and operate. More than one has been abandoned or replaced by trap-and-haul systems wherein fish are trucked past dams. Trap-and-haul operations are also expensive, and the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife budgets to operate them are shrinking. One at Sunset Falls on the Skykomish may be closed because of money problems. Where would the money to build and operate fish ladders or trap and hauls on the Yakima come from?

Claims are being made that there could be huge sockeye runs on the Yakima if fish ladders are built. That seems very unlikely. Sockeye salmon in Lake Wenatchee are not plentiful, and the Wenatchee starts out with a lot more water in it than the Yakima and has a lot less taken out. Lake Wenatchee sockeye can be fished only very occasionally, in years when there is sufficient escapement past the dams on the Columbia. Hopes of big sockeye runs on the Yakima have little to rest on, and hopes of securing money to build many new fish ladders are just that: hopes.

In addition, the Integrated Plan does little to improve instream flows in the lower Yakima River. Returning fish must first make it up the lower Yakima River where flows are lowest and temperatures highest.

“On-farm water conservation; More robust water markets; Groundwater recharge to improve late summer stream flows; and re-operation and possible removal of some existing irrigation diversion dams”

NCCC response: Although vague and tentative, these all sound good and desirable. But why should we have to sacrifice the forests at Bumping Lake for them? Or more exactly, why should we sacrifice the forests at Bumping for a piece of paper on which the BuRec and irrigators agree that they are desirable? That’s really what we will get, a statement from the BuRec and irrigators that these are good ideas and should happen. And that’s it.

Water conservation and water markets will happen once the Yakima irrigators start paying something approaching the true cost of the water they receive, and not before. As long as they get taxpayer-subsidized water, why bother conserving it, or even directing it toward the most profitable crops? It’s much easier to just continue doing things the way they have always been done. Strange things like growing hay on the Kittitas Reclamation District for the Japanese racehorse

industry for shipment through the Port of Seattle will continue. If the growers of low-value crops happen to be senior water “right” holders, and they often are, they will continue using the water for low-value crops until someone offers them more money to put it to better use elsewhere. And that won’t happen to any extent until rational pricing allows water markets to develop. The Yakima work group plan won’t change much of that by relying on “voluntary” conservation.

“Protection of threatened landscapes like 46,000 acres in the Teanaway River Valley”

NCCC response: We have heard a number of different versions of what might happen in the Teanaway as part of the Yakima work group plan. Some people say it will be brought into public ownership. Further questioning usually leads to that defaulting down to some sort of “conservation easement,” or purchase of development rights. Since outright purchase of the lands would be expensive, and Kittitas County officials would object to losing taxable private lands, we assume that a development rights purchase is what is really being discussed.

It’s hard to understand why any group that supports giving away the ancient forests at Bumping should want to do so.

It’s worth looking into what is really at stake in the Teanaway. Some Yakima work group participants have talked about the Teanaway as relatively unspoiled, with 10,000 acres or more of old-growth forest. If there is anything like that there, no one at NCCC has ever seen it, nor have any of the groups pushing the Yakima plan produced any evidence of it. The Teanaway lands in question were for decades owned by Boise Cascade, and they were in the business of cutting trees. It’s fair to say that the Teanaway lands are some of the most heavily cutover in the state. There is no old-growth forest, and any tree there older than 40 years could be considered ancient.

Even though they are heavily logged, no one wants to see the Teanaway lands converted to suburban/exurban developments. In 2006 it may have looked like McMansions would spread across most of the state, but the real estate economy today is nothing like it was then. The threat of development in the Teanaway has almost disappeared. The real estate bubble has burst. With no real employment base, the effects in Kittitas County have been especially severe. Foreclosures are everywhere, as well as “zombie” loans where banks are no longer being paid, but don’t foreclose because they don’t want to further devalue everything they are already holding.

These changes in the Kittitas real estate market are structural, not cyclical. This is not a temporary downturn. There is a huge and growing inventory of properties in Kittitas County that command barely a fraction of the prices they did before 2008, and an ever shrinking number of buyers. The giant Suncadia development near Cle Elum has been on the brink of bankruptcy for years now. No one will be spending money for expensive new infrastructure for development in the remote Teanaway when there are plenty of more desirable properties elsewhere in Kittitas County getting cheaper by the day.

Comparisons with King County’s purchase of development rights at Hancock Timberlands’ Snoqualmie Forest might be instructive. King County purchased the development rights there several years ago on 90,000 acres for \$22 million. Much of that land is flat, close to Seattle, and developable. The Teanaway area is half as big, rugged and remote, not located anywhere near Seattle, and much less valuable per acre than the Snoqualmie Forest area. If Snoqualmie rights could be bought for \$22 million, Teanaway rights should sell for far less.

But they won’t “sell” at all because there is no market for them. Even if development was a possibility, county governments have the means to regulate it under the Growth Management Act and their zoning powers. There is no need to purchase the development rights. And even if there was, the Yakima work group won’t be coming up with the money to do so. All we will be getting, again, is a piece of paper saying that BuRec and the irrigators agree with doing it. There won’t be any money attached. The real cost of any conservation easement/development rights

Continued on page 19

Strange water bill in Washington State Senate

By Rick McGuire

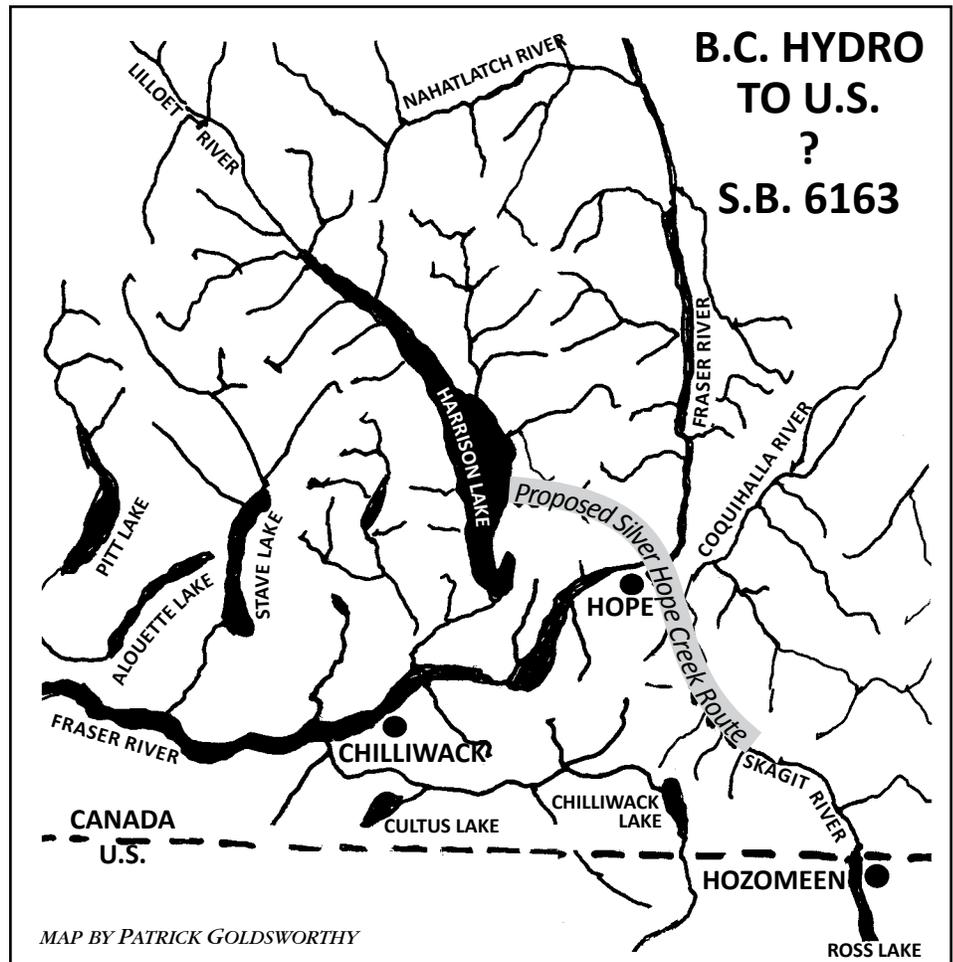
A rather strange bill has been introduced in the Washington State Senate which, if successful, would direct the state Department of Ecology to begin discussions with the British Columbia Ministry of Environment regarding acquisition of water rights by Washington State in the Harrison River watershed in the BC Coast Range. The bill also directs DOE to look into the possibility of using Seattle's dams and reservoirs on the Skagit to store such water or water imported from elsewhere in British Columbia.

The bill's chief sponsor is Senator Doug Ericksen, Republican from Whatcom County. In his committee testimony, Senator Ericksen raised concerns that the Nooksack River may not be able to satisfy all the demands put on it in future, especially if Native Americans exercise their treaty rights to keep water in the river to support fish populations.

Importation of water into western Washington is not an idea that has been talked about much. The mechanics of moving water from the Harrison to the Skagit watershed appear to be challenging, extremely expensive, and fraught with difficulties.

The Harrison River enters the Fraser from the north in the vicinity of Chilliwack. The very large Harrison Lake sits not far upstream of its mouth. Above Harrison Lake, the river's name changes to Lillooet, and it extends far north to the vicinity of the 51st parallel in the heavily glaciated and rugged BC Coast Range. It is a very big watershed, flanked by the Squamish system to the west and tributaries of the Fraser Canyon to the east. The watershed receives heavy precipitation and the amount of glacier ice dwarfs anything in the Washington Cascades. The river's flow likely exceeds that of the Skagit by a wide margin.

But even if the Canadians were persuaded to sell some of it to Washington State, how would it get here? SB 6163 talks about using the Skagit reservoirs to store the water. But the two watersheds are far apart. The shortest route would be up and across the Fraser to Hope, then up the Silverhope Creek valley and over a pass into the Skagit, following the same route that the road from Hope to Hozomeen at the head of Ross Reservoir takes. It would involve moving the water many miles and up about 2000 feet in elevation.



California offers two examples of such a project. Massive pumping stations move water from the southern end of California's Central Valley up and over the mountains to southern California. This hugely expensive system feeds the heavily populated Los Angeles basin. It seems unlikely that something similar could be constructed and operated for the benefit of western Washington agriculture.

In California's Owens Valley aqueduct, water is taken from the east side of the Sierra Nevada, starting at a latitude farther north than San Francisco, and sent to Los Angeles. That system is not only gravity fed, with its intake at over 4000 feet, it actually produces rather than consumes power. The long, straight Owens Valley parallels the Sierra for hundreds of miles, and the mountains farther south are so arranged that the energy provided by the high intake elevation of L.A.'s water is enough to power it over the mountains.

Nature has not designed the Cascades and Coast Range with similar projects in mind. Although it might be theoretically possible to put an intake far up the Harrison, it would need to be located at least 75 miles north of the Fraser to be at an altitude of 2000 feet, and even that would probably not be enough. And there is no long flat Owens Valley down which to run an aqueduct. It would instead have to traverse the rugged Coast Range for its entire length, and it is highly doubtful that enough of the potential energy in the water could be conserved to power it up and over the Fraser-Skagit divide.

In short, the idea of moving water from the Harrison to the Skagit seems to run up against the laws of physics. Any project to do so would be fabulously expensive, and it is hard to see how any sort of future water demand in western Washington could even begin to justify it in economic terms. The bill implies but does not specifically state that water would be moved

Record of Decision issued for Holden Mine remediation

from the Harrison to the Skagit. Perhaps other rivers are envisioned as a source for water importation to the Skagit. It is hard to imagine where such water could come from, other BC rivers already having well-established routes to the sea that do not flow toward the Skagit.

Although none of the ideas in SB 6163 seem at all practical, the waters of British Columbia are under assault as never before.

It is also possible that some sort of direct route from the Harrison to Whatcom County is envisioned, but if so, the bill says nothing about it. Such a route would not present the insurmountable difficulties of moving water to the Skagit, but would still be hugely expensive. It is hard to see where money for any such projects could ever be found.

Although none of the ideas in SB 6163 seem at all practical, the waters of British Columbia are under assault as never before. A tidal wave of new projects propose to dam up rivers, with many already under construction. So far, BC has been unable to market new hydropower as “green energy,” but efforts are underway from many directions to change that. A big new market that cares nothing at all about “green” is the Alberta tar sand strip mines. Since it takes almost a barrel’s worth of natural gas energy to produce a barrel of tar sands oil, operators are looking into ways of electrifying as many processes as possible. This spells disaster for BC rivers. In comparison, the idea of taking some water from the Harrison River to sell to Washington probably looks pretty insignificant to the provincial government. But even if the chances of actually doing it are small, NCCC plans to closely follow developments and cooperate with allies in BC should the need arise.



The U.S. Forest Service, in cooperation with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Washington State Department of Ecology (aka, “the Agencies”) signed the Record of Decision (ROD) for cleanup of the former Holden Mine Site on the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest on January 27, 2012.

Per the ROD, the remedy for the mine cleanup will focus on the cleanup of hazardous substances, at levels toxic to aquatic life, in the mine ground water and mine drainage being released into nearby Railroad Creek.

Construction prep for the project began last summer and will continue as soon as the snow melts. The bulk of Phase I should begin in 2013 and take two years, followed by five years of monitoring before Phase II of remedy construction begins.

The cleanup remedy includes:

- collection of water discharging from the mine and groundwater impacted by the mine, tailings, and waste rock
- construction of a barrier wall and water collection system to reduce the amount of contaminated water that would otherwise enter the creek
- treatment to remove hazardous substances from water before it is released into Railroad Creek
- rerouting a portion of Railroad Creek to reduce exposure to adjacent tailing piles

- regrading and contouring the tailing piles and waste rock piles to reduce the risk of erosion and slope failure.

The Agencies considered a number of alternatives for the cleanup of the Holden Mine Site, and have decided that the selected remedy is the best option.

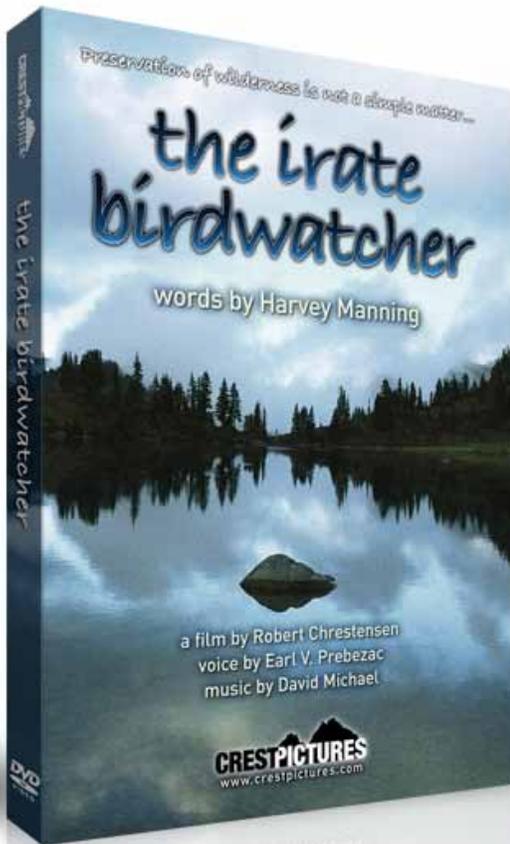
NCCC has been tracking the Holden mine situation for a couple years now (See “A Pilgrimage to Image Lake via Holden, and a tale of two mines” in the Summer/Fall 2011 issue of *The Wild Cascades*, and “The Holden Mine Problem” in the Spring 2009 issue). We plan to keep a close eye during Phase I and the 5-year monitoring process to assure that if further remediation is needed (and we expect it likely will be) that the mining company isn’t free of its obligation before the tailings and leachate are fully contained and Railroad Creek is clean.

Perhaps most important, NCCC wishes to call public attention to this as an example of the impacts of mining on Cascade forest and wetland ecosystems, and remind everyone that our unprotected National Forests have many potential mineral sites which could lead to similar damage.

Mine tailings will be regraded and regarded to reduce the risk of erosion and slope failure.

—PHIL FENNER PHOTO

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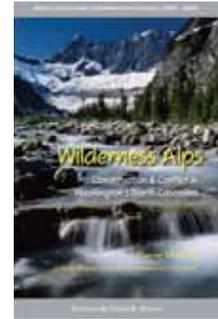
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by HARVEY MANNING AND NCCC

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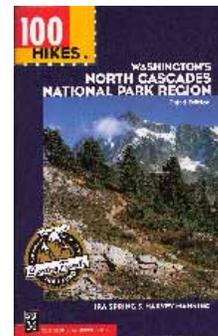
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The Bumping Lake tradeaway

Continued from page 15

purchase in the Teanaway would be the forests at Bumping. The forests at Bumping are immeasurably more valuable.

“Designation of 12 new Wild and Scenic rivers, over 20,000 acres of Wilderness area additions, and two new National Recreation Areas”

NCCC response: Yet again we have something of limited value, existing only on paper. As usually enacted, Wild and Scenic river designations make little difference on the ground other than preventing dam construction. But if the groups here are signing away the one place where dam construction is actually likely, at Bumping Lake, what value is there in “protecting” some other places where no one has ever wanted to put dams? Likewise, 20,000 acres of Wilderness sounds nice, but so what if you are trading away the one place that most needs Wilderness protection? Taking some of the areas near Bumping that nobody wants to flood and putting them into Wilderness changes very little. They would be token actions at best.

The only thing that would be produced here is a statement from BuRec and the irrigators that they agree to these designa-

tions. That’s it. The environmental/conservation community would have to work to convince Congress to make the designations actually happen, something they are free to do already. Nothing really changes other than BuRec saying they don’t oppose Wilderness in some limited areas that they have no interest in.

The National Recreation Areas in the plan, which would enshrine motorized recreation, appear to have been hastily thought up and thrown into the mix at the last moment in order give something to jeeps, ATVers and motorcyclists. They were not mentioned in a Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement issued in November 2011. In fact, the final “watershed plan,” including the motorized NRAs was not released until January 4, 2012, the day after the end of the DPEIS comment period. Why these NRAs should seem necessary to the Yakima work group is unclear, since any opposition from motor enthusiasts to flooding Bumping is unlikely. It is probably just something that was stuck in to bolster the claim that “everybody wins,” and perhaps to balance the wilderness and river recommendations, modest though they be. There may be a belief that local politicians will oppose any new Wilderness unless Congress also “locks in” motorized use elsewhere in the Yakima basin.

Off-road vehicles (ORVs) can be very damaging, and motorsport recreation needs to be carefully managed. The ill-

thought-out NRA proposals here would simply consign over 40,000 acres of public lands to “backcountry motorized” use in perpetuity, with no study of whether these are the right places for such potentially destructive activities, or how to manage the impacts. These NRA proposals conflict with all existing management plans for these areas and would set a terrible precedent. The U.S. Forest Service, manager of these lands, opposes them. The proposed NRAs would also have spillover effects outside the Yakima basin, negatively affecting ORV use, advocacy and legislation throughout the state.

It’s hard to understand why any group that supports giving away the ancient forests at Bumping should want to do so. The BuRec and Ecology’s Yakima Work Group process has been flawed from the start, with the selection of only one environmental group out of 20 participants, subcommittee meetings closed to the public, votes taken prior to public comment, and Workgroup agreement to issue a PDEIS that failed to include any alternatives, other than a required No Action alternative.

NCCC’s view is that BuRec, Ecology and the irrigators have built a house of cards in order to drive a flawed process where they “win.” With an educated public, we can assure that public values, state and Federal taxpayers, and the ancient forests at Bumping Lake do not lose.

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*The winter sun and Del Campo Peak emerge from clouds during a quiet day of skiing,
Morning Star Peak on right.*
—TOM HAMMOND PHOTO