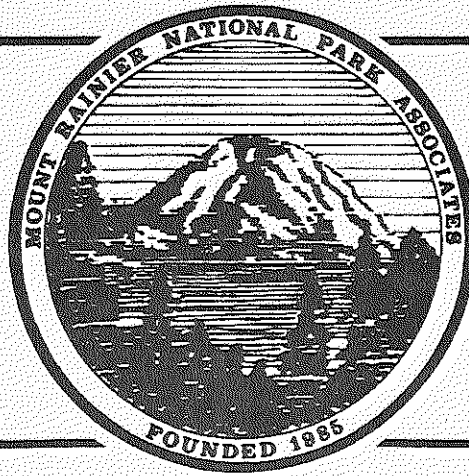


MRNPA**NEWS****NEWSLETTER OF THE MOUNT RAINIER NATIONAL PARK ASSOCIATES****ARTICLES THIS ISSUE . . .**

FROM THE SUMMIT
 MRNP ASSOCIATES BUILD TRAILS
 SPOTTED OWL DECISION INVESTIGATED
 WHAT SHOULD A NATIONAL PARK ACCOMPLISH?
 LEAVE THE FLAMES ALONE
 COPPER TOPPER PROPOSAL HAS LITTLE MERIT
 STATE ROUTE 410 NEWSBRIEF
 FOREST SERVICE GOOFED

FROM THE SUMMIT . . .

The Wilderness proposal for the three Washington National Parks has passed the House and is with the Senate. Congress may be adjourned by the time you read this. Although our letters were outnumbered 3 to 1 by those who oppose any form of Wilderness, the Bill is making good progress. Thank you to those of you who have written your Senators and Congressman. We have secured improvements to the Bill, although the grant on the East border at Crystal Mountain that will allow expansion of the ski area is still a part of the Bill. The language on the setback from the road is improved and the buffer on the East boundary removed. When the Bill passes, there will be no immediate change in the management of the Backcountry. The Park Service has been following their best understanding of wilderness management requirements. This Bill will prevent any future change towards a more intensive development of the Backcountry.

There will be three opportunities this fall for user comment on development plans at Mount Rainier National Park:

- * West Side Road
- * Sunrise Lodge Construction
- * Highway 410 Resurfacing

RENEW MEMBERSHIP

The West Side Road has been closed due to an extensive washout from a mudflow in Tacoma Creek. The preferred alternative will reopen the road.

The existing concessionaire and Ranger Station facility at Sunrise on the East Side of the mountain is in need of extensive repair. The Park Service proposal will contain 5 alternatives, and they will recommend a new two story building between the existing structure and the comfort station to the west.

The proposal for Highway 410 is still under discussion, but we understand the road will not be widened and at least one bridge needs to be rebuilt.

Bob Aegerter
 President, MRNPA

OOPS, WE GOOFED!

Our treasurer's address was misprinted on the renewal notices which were mailed out last month. Those of you who so diligently renewed your memberships and had them returned to you because of an incorrect address, PLEASE TRY AGAIN. We are really sorry for the inconvenience this has caused you. You really deserve a pat on the back for your help and support rather than the hassle of addressing another envelope and licking another stamp. Please...return your renewed membership to the same Treasurer but a different street number:

John Titland
 Treasurer, MRNPA
 15242 SE 48th Drive
 Bellevue, WA 98006

And thank you for your understanding and your commitment to Mount Rainier National Park Associates.

Margie Goulden

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FOREST SERVICE FAILS TO NOTIFY MRNPA OF MEETING

Several MRNPA members recently were notified by mail of the pending timber sale proposed for the old-growth forest area which extends west from the Nisqually Entrance to approximately 1 mile west of Copper Creek Inn. The Forest Service plans to log this area in 1991. There are three harvest units within the sale area, which in combination are called the "Copper Topper Project." This particular area, in addition to its aesthetic importance to visitors to Mount Rainier National Park, contains prime wildlife habitat area for several species. A number of our members recently had recommended this area for protection under the Gifford Pinchot Forest Plan because of exactly these values. The area is also close to the Glacier View Wilderness area, and probably provides escape cover and winter habitat to animals moving in and out of the Park. It is indisputable that clear-cutting the area will ruin the aesthetics for visitors, and it is probable that several businesses along the road will be quite vocal in their opposition.

Although Mount Rainier National Park Associates requested that several of its Board members be notified of any timber sales in and around the park, they were not notified of a meeting on the project which the Forest Service held at the community building at Longmire on June 8, 1988. The Forest Service invited representatives from the local community, Department of Wildlife, WISE, Forest Industry, and the Park Service. Responses from the meeting included dissatisfaction

(See "Forest Service Fails" p. 3)

LONGMIRE RENOVATION FUNDS DUE

Both the House and Senate passed a Department of Interior appropriations bill on September 8th which will include funding for renovation of Longmire Inn. Also included in the bill was authorization to increase National Forest timber harvest by 100 million board feet above administration request; a plan for a comprehensive inventory of old-growth on federal lands; renovation money for the Henry Jackson visitor center at North Cascades, Crater Lake Lodge, Oregon Trail Interpretive Center, Oregon Coast Museum, Fort Clatsop Park; land acquisition monies for Columbia Gorge Scenic Area and Grays Harbor Wildlife Refuge; and various fish enhancement programs. The old-growth inventory is a result of indications that 50% of the old-growth on National Forests will be logged in the next 50 years.

Roger Garrett
Secretary, MRNPA

M R N P ASSOCIATES BUILD TRAILS

With fresh snow clinging to nearby leaves, 8 trail workers, under the able auspices of NPS trail boss Steve Scott, steadfastly staggered up the Skyline Trail into the September stillness. Their mission: to set stones along the sides of the trail's section near Sluiskin Falls.

"These rocks are color-coded," Scott explained. "The red ones are heavy and the grey ones are heavier."

Over a month earlier, 17 hardy souls had artfully delineated part of the Glacier Vista Trail with stones similar in size to those used by the second group. And though the stones don't get any lighter, the rewards don't get any greater. After all, this is Rainier country!!!

I would like to thank the following people who were a visible sign of Mount Rainier National Park Associates:

Art Kiehn, Kim Peterson, Jon Soest, Bob and MaryJo Aegerter, Jeff Goulden, Ruth Ittner, Ray Gooch, Mary Jo Adams, Jo Marpert (Mountaineers), Edith Goodman, Paul Wiseman, John and Jane Titland, Gary Wilburn, John Myatt, Paul Kiehn, Mary Fries, Steve Amendi (VOW) and Stan Dittmar. We really can make a difference!

Perhaps there will always be some special trail to maintain and enjoy. A trail is to a hiker as an image is to a poem.

Larry Carreau, MRNPA
Trails/Outdoor Chairperson

EDITORIAL STAFF

COORDINATOR: Margie Goulden

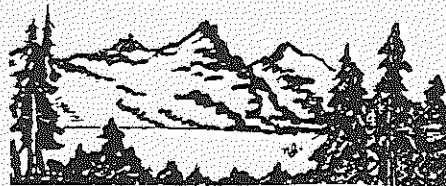
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TYPISTS: Peg Engel, Sally Soest,
Margie Goulden, Jeff Goulden

LAY-OUT: Van Perdue, Jeff Goulden

MAILING: Arlene Conde, Sally Soest

ARTICLES: Submitted by committee heads,
board members, and members-at-large



COPPER TOPPER PROPOSAL HAS LITTLE MERIT

The proposed Copper Topper Timber Sales have seemingly little merit to conservationists. It appears that the Forest Service's ultimate goal is to cut all of the timber under its "protection." Even though a sizable percentage of our population would like its part of the timber left in its natural state, the Forest Service is more concerned about "when" to cut rather than "whether" to cut.

Besides the fact that many Washingtonians want their trees left standing, there are other reasons why the proposed Copper Topper cuts should not be made.

Consider runoff control. To remove the timber from the slopes in Goat Creek and Copper Creek Basins in a pretty high-risk operation. Will the consequent flooding and erosion be termed an "act of God"?

Clear cuts in an area so close to Mount Rainier National Park will merely build up winter elk herds. And where do the elk browse in the summer? None other than the fragile subalpine meadows of the Park.

Tourism is very important to the Washington economy; especially since the Tourism Bureau has been directing everyone to MRNP these past few years. Mount Rainier may be superb in all its glory and splendor. However, unless one has tunnel vision, clearcuts and denuded forests on the Park borders have degraded the scenic beauty that should belong to a national park.

There seems to be an inherent opportunity in this proposal for the U.S. Forest Service to work with the National Park Service to devise a plan to reduce the impact of visitors. Rather than removing the trees on National Forest land, so close to Mount Rainier National Park, perhaps the USFS could create opportunities for recreational use that would alleviate pressure on the Park.

Christine Lake, Beljica Meadows, views of Mount Rainier and Mount St. Helens, subalpine trees, shrubs and wildflowers are superb bits of Nature that with good planning and supervision could be enjoyed by many. But the alternative for Copper Topper -- the single destructive use of logging -- may become reality in 1991.

Margie Goulden, with help from
Bob Ramsey, Audubon Society

FOREST SERVICE FAILS

with limited participation, inadequate notification, and inability to find copies of the Draft Forest Plan. It is very evident that this meeting was severely lacking in full public participation, and adequate notification of key interested parties. Certainly Mount Rainier National Park Associates should have been high on the list of groups with a potential interest in a proposal to log to the boundary of the park. Both the Park Service and the Forest Service must be held accountable for their failure to include full public participation in the planning process.

Roger Garrett
Secretary, MRNPA

M1. RAINIER NEWS BRIEFS

from the National Park Service

Travel:	Hotel Auto Bckcntry			
	Visitors	Guests	Campers	Campers
August 88	469,455	9,347	42,642	8,291
August 87	364,413	9,297	43,776	11,720
88 to date	1,329,482	27,766	97,755	24,263
87 to date	1,225,186	27,672	98,435	25,722
Percent	+8%yr	-	-	+6%yr

Camping: All campgrounds are open except White River.

Westside Road to Re-Open

The Park Service plans to re-open Mount Rainier's Westside Road as soon as funds become available. Cy Hentges, a management assistant with the Park, states "We are looking at somewhere in the neighborhood of \$60,000 to bring that section of damaged road back up to standard. Once we get it our plans are to start work on the project, weather permitting."



WHAT SHOULD A NATIONAL PARK ACCOMPLISH

excerpts from Robert Reinhold,
New York Times, July 10, 1988

Congress handed a tough dilemma to the stewards of America's national parks in 1916 when it created the National Park Service to "provide for the enjoyment" of natural and historic sites, scenery and wildlife in the parks "by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations." But perhaps never has the inherent contradiction between using the parks for recreation and preserving them for posterity been more pointed than it is this summer, as vacationers crowd into them.

The number of visitors hit a record 287 million last year, and is projected to grow to 450 million over the next two decades, putting enormous pressures on the natural habitat, fauna and visitor accommodations at many of the 337 national parks, seashores and other lands managed by the service. Meanwhile, spreading urbanization is encroaching on many of the parks, while others are threatened by logging and oil drilling and the construction of condominiums just outside the boundaries.

Against this backdrop, the Administration brought the park-use debate to a head in March by proposing a new set of national parks management policies. The proposed changes, the first in a decade, have enraged preservationists and many in Congress, who say the policies would shift the balance toward greater public use, allowing more "impairment" of the 80 million acres of parkland. "In order to fulfill its mandated purpose," the document said, "the National Park Service is willing to accept modest, short-term effects, but it will not cross over into long-term degradation."

That is not good enough, in the view of conservationists such as Steven C. Whitney of The Wilderness Society, a Washington-based environmental group. "The law says unimpaired, not almost unimpaired -- it is an absolute standard," Mr. Whitney said. "The parks belong more to our children and grandchildren than to us. I may want to go to a park and not get in. The Park Service will increasingly face that dilemma."

"Parks are set aside because they are special," said Representative Bruce Vento, the Minnesota Democrat who chairs the Subcommittee on National Parks and Public Lands. "We should try to resolve questions on the side of protecting resources when we can. The idea of how we enjoy parks has changed. We do not sit on grandstands and watch bears eat garbage in Yellowstone any more."

But the notion that the parks should be saved mainly for distant generations and for wildlife has not been adopted by the Reagan administration, whose officials have main-

(See "What is a Park?" p. 5)

SPOTTED OWL ISSUE INVESTIGATED

Earlier this year the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) rejected a petition to list the Northern Spotted Owl as an endangered species. Successful listing would have protected important spotted owl habitat on National Forest land. Because of possible irregularities in the USFWS decision, Mike Lowry has initiated an investigation by the independent General Accounting Office.

The USFWS decision may have violated a number of important procedures in the listing process:

USFWS did not even consider federally "threatened status" for the spotted owl -- although it is legally required to do so.

USFWS issued a statement that there was insufficient biological data to suggest the owl is in trouble. In fact, USFWS biologists have issued a number of reports showing that the owl is decreasing in population, has declining nesting success, and is facing increased competition as a result of habitat modification due to clear-cutting.

USFWS directed its biologists not to write the conclusions of its status report. In other words, the biologists did the work, but the headquarters staff wrote the conclusions, which are simply not based on the biology.

WHAT IS A PARK? continued from p. 4)

tained that a small band of elitists would restrict access to hikers and backpackers.

There have been clashes over tourist flights into the Grand Canyon, over plans to build a commercial "aquatic theme park" at Gateway National Recreation Area at Riis Park in New York, over the Administration's reluctance to purchase new parkland and to deter commercial developments nearby, and over plans to reintroduce wolves into Yellowstone despite the objections of local ranchers.

Sometimes the environmentalists have won. The Administration has taken steps to thwart a developer who wants to put a shopping mall adjacent to the Manassas National Battlefield Park, the Civil War site in Virginia that is being engulfed by Washington's metropolitan growth.

But the Reagan Administration has opposed certain additions to the park system because farming, ranching, mining and energy development would be hurt. Interior Secretary Donald Hodel, who oversees the Park Service, says the agency's mission is to "balance use and preservation." He has called the parks "living museums," to be enjoyed "appropriately" by this generation, and argued that there is plenty of parkland for everybody.

"With 80 million acres of parks it seems to me we have the opportunity for an entire array of things," he said. "You should not try to make an overall determination throughout the parks on what is appropriate." The proposed new management guidelines include the "zoning" of each park for different kinds of uses, an approach that is vehemently opposed by conservationists.

The parks have not fared as badly under the Reagan Administration as conservationists had feared. The annual operating budget for the service has grown from \$553 million in 1982 to an estimated \$744 million this year, and \$1.2 billion was spent for repairs on deteriorating roads, sewers and buildings. Conservationists generally praise Mr. Reagan's director of parks, William Penn Mott, Jr., though he is said often to have been undermined by his superiors in the Interior Department. Still, Paul C. Pritchard, president of the National Parks and Conservation Association, a watchdog group in Washington, said the parks are "faced with the greatest threat ever."

The key question is how to handle the growing crush of visitors. Perhaps the Park Service has not been imaginative enough in fostering development that enhances the park experience without degrading the land.

LEAVE THE FLAMES ALONE!

by Jim Robbins

[Yellowstone National Park] A philosophy of allowing nature to make the rules with minimal interference from humans is being tested here in Wyoming at Yellowstone, the largest national park in the country.

Forest fires, believed to be the most widespread here in centuries, have burned across nearly 10 percent of Yellowstone's 2.2 million acres.

In July, fire threatened a new \$26 million resort complex in the park's interior. Fires have also closed roads, and for 2 weeks the park's south entrance was closed. Though the National Park Service is now fighting some fires here, a dozen are being allowed to burn.

It may seem strange to a generation that grew up with stern admonitions from Smokey Bear, but the Park Service refuses to use words like "damage" or "destruction," and instead describes how the fires will rejuvenate aging park forests and benefit wildlife.

"People say '200,000 acres of Yellowstone is destroyed,'" said Robert Barbee, the park's superintendent. "That's preposterous. Fire is a stimulant and is as important to the ecosystem as sunshine and rain."

"We're not in the commodities business," he added. "We're in the naturalness business."

Some people, particularly those who live in the community around the park and on land along park borders, say the policy verges on insanity. Tourism has been off, and a threatening haze obscures the landscape and stings eyes and throats.

Nature's Way. The "natural fire" policy began in 1972 as part of an overall Park Service decision to allow nature to take its course. Park officials do not (See "Leave the Flames Alone" p. 6)

COMMITTEES

WILDERNESS: Jon Soest
WILDLIFE: Yolanda Thompson
MEMBERSHIP: Margie Goulden
TRAILS/OUTDOOR: Larry Carreau
VISITOR IMPACT: Roger Garrett

LEAVE THE FLAMES ALONE continued

let every fire burn; they try to put out man-made fires, while lightning-caused fires are carefully monitored and controlled or suppressed if they threaten life or private property.

This year, the driest here in more than a century of record-keeping, so many fires are raging that the Park Service is overwhelmed and has begun fighting new ones. With so much burning, resources for watching fires and keeping them away from developed areas are nearly exhausted. More than 2,000 firefighters are now in the park.

Natural-fire management evolved after park officials concluded that fire suppression had been too successful. In the absence of fire, the lodgepole pines that dominate Yellowstone's forests would fall among other closely spaced trees when they died, creating a "fire ladder." When a fire does start, it climbs on the fallen timbers to the forest canopy, consuming much more acreage than it would have had fire been allowed to periodically clean out the debris.

Self-Renewal. Fire is a part of the ecology of the lodgepole forests. The tall, skinny trees have pine cones that release seeds only in the heat of a fire. "They blossom like a ripe rose and spew out their seeds in the wind," said Steve Betlach, a firefighter. "Rain pushes the seeds into the ash and nutrients are released."

The forest is born again. And the growth of plants that had been stunted beneath the forest canopy is spurred by the burst of light.

Much of Yellowstone's landscape is protected by natural fire banks, such as creeks and rivers, rocky ridges and lakes. Young forests, which are so green the fire virtually comes to a halt when it reaches them, also function as breaks.

The fires cause a mosaic effect on the landscape, leaving a lot of green that provides cover for wildlife. Owls and many species of tree-nesting birds, such as woodpeckers, make their homes in the charred snags, as standing dead trees are called.

Contrary to popular belief, Park Service officials say, wildlife is not harmed or displaced permanently. "This is not a Bambi-like situation," with terrified animals fleeing a wall of

flame, Mr. Barbee said. "The wildlife move away from it. Then they move back in."

The fire enhances elk habitat by allowing grasses to grow among the burned-out trees, with the ash providing fertilizer. Researchers are studying what effects the fire might have on the park's imperiled grizzly bear, but there are no indications of problems yet.

Yellowstone has been an important laboratory for studying the effects of wildfire. The United States Forest Service, which is accustomed to seeing fire as an enemy and throwing every available defense against it, says it is learning from the Yellowstone fires.

Dave Fischer, a Forest Service firefighter, said that the old-time firefighters "who believe you hit every fire hard and control it by 10 a.m. the next morning," are retiring or quitting.

"The cigar-chomping, take-charge, general-type firefighter in a situation like this would flat go bananas," he said.

STATE ROUTE 410 NEWS BRIEF

from the National Park Service

Neal G. Guse, Superintendent at Mount Rainier National Park, has announced that the National Park Service is beginning a study of alternative options to reconstruct that section of State Highway 410, also known as the Mather Memorial Parkway, through Mount Rainier National Park.

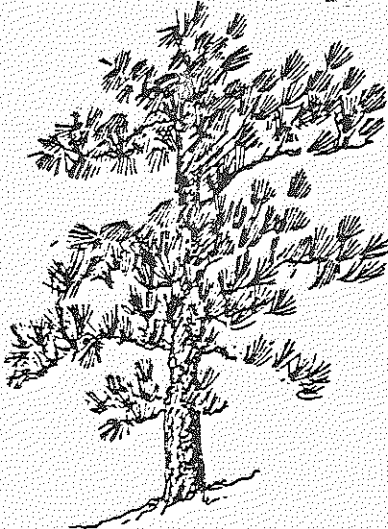
Guse stated that the project will start at the north park boundary southeast of Enumclaw, Washington and will end at the summit of Chinook Pass. This work is part of an overall project to reconstruct approximately 60 miles of SR 410, portions of which have already been reconstructed east of the park.

Highway engineers have identified structural deficiency problems along this section of road. The proposed road reconstruction is expected to include minor widening, base repairs, resurfacing, intersection modifications, guardrail installations, and replacement of Deadwood Creek Bridge. No major realignments are anticipated and the work will essentially occur within the existing road prism. Potential safety problems will also be addressed.

(See "State Route 410" p. 7)

SR 410 passes through several environments within Mount Rainier National Park including stands of old growth forest, the White River floodplain, and the subalpine meadows around Cayuse and Chinook Passes. Numerous opportunities for enjoyment of world-class scenery exist. The proposed project will include improvements to existing turnouts and provisions for more opportunities to see and enjoy the significant environments of Mount Rainier.

The National Park Service will prepare an Environmental Assessment to evaluate the potential impacts of this project on the natural, cultural, and social environments. This assessment is anticipated to be available for public review by late Fall 1988. Input from the public on this project is welcomed. If you are interested in or have concerns about this project, we encourage you to contact Superintendent Guse at Tahoma Woods-Star Route, Ashford, WA 98304.



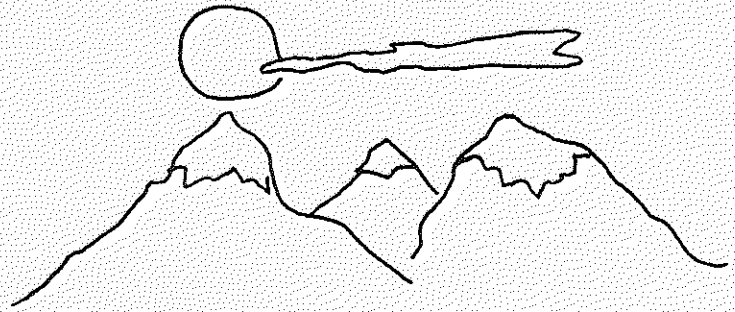
ROLLING STONES GATHER NO MAS

Like a whisper
That's been blown out of proportion,
The wind assails the face of the earth...
Yet who am I to stop it?

Like a child-
Hood dream dragged under stones of years...
An avalanche of heartaches, it appears.
Yet who am I to break loose?

Massive outburst floods contain my tears,
as I scatter forth the stones of years.

Larry Carreau



THE SMALLEST CARNIVORE

On a day-hike last July 24th through Windy Gap on our way to view the Natural Bridge, I spotted two small weasel-like creatures in a rock slide near the trail about a quarter mile toward the Bridge from the main trail junction.

Both animals were about six inches long, tawny-orange, including their short tails, with white underparts. One grasped the other in its mouth and dragged it into a hole in the rocks. Now what were they?

When I reached home I consulted my mammal books and discovered I might have seen Least Weasels (*Mustela rixosa*) which are the smallest living carnivores in North America. They live on rodents, including pika, but mostly on mice.

According to Burt and Grossenheider's Field Guide to the Mammals, however, this species does not occur in southern British Columbia or in Washington.

The 1927 Mammals and Birds of Mt. Rainier National Park by Taylor and Shaw lists a small Streater Weasel (*Mustela cicognanii streatorii*), chocolate brown, with a third of its tail black. This one occurs from the park boundaries to 6000 ft., all around the mountain, often in rock slides.

Now, the weasels I saw had no black tails and were not dark brown, or even brown. Perhaps an MRNPA member can clarify the identification.

Edith Goodman
MRNPA Member

If any of our readers can help with this animal's identification, please send information to MRNPA Newsletter, Margie Goulden, 4710 - 129th Ave. E., Sumner, WA 98390; or call 863-3265.

RENEW MEMBERSHIP

RENEW MEMBERSHIP TODAY

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