



MRNPA NEWS

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From the Summit

Is someone out there willing to become the editor of the "MRNPA News"?

Joan Burton, who has served as editor of the "MRNPA News" for the past five years, has decided it is time to call it quits. Joan's diligent efforts over these five years resulted in the amazing variety of articles that have been published in this newsletter. All of us who have read and enjoyed the newsletter produced under her guidance owe Joan a hearty "Thank You" and every compliment on a job well done.

Can we find a new editor? Well, some description of how the newsletter is put together may help entice a volunteer to give it a try. First, it should be known that getting the "MRNPA News" published is a cooperative effort, not something the editor does alone. MRNPA Board Members are expected (requested, pleaded with, cajoled, assigned, etc.) to write articles about current issues for the newsletter. A semi-official newsletter "Nag" has even been assigned to pester Board Members to get these articles to the newsletter editor in a timely manner.

In the past, the editor, Joan, has typed these articles into her PC, along with the many articles she has found through her various sources. This is the point where the newsletter editor is an editor, determining the content of the newsletter and editing the articles that have been submitted. This is also the point where the editor's job potentially can be made simpler and easier.

Many Board Members have PC's and are able to submit articles to the editor by modem or typed on a diskette. If we could find someone with a personal computer system capable of accepting electronic transfer of files,

Continued on page two

Now It's Time to Plan for People!

by John Titland

On June 2, Howard Selmer, MRNPA Board Member, and I attended a Transportation Workshop at Longmire hosted by the National Park Service (NPS). The morning session included presentations by several consultants hired by the NPS to: 1) study the current transportation problems at Mount Rainier National Park (MRNP) and 2) make recommendations.

The data the consultants had gathered was not much of a surprise to anyone who visits Mount Rainier on sunny, summer days. They found too many cars: at Paradise, 750 parking spaces in two lots overfilled with more than 1300 cars parked; at Sunrise 260 spaces plus 300 spaces in the overflow areas all 100% occupied most of the day; at Mowich Lake room for 50 cars but 176 cars parked up to 1.5 miles from the lake; at Ipsut Creek room for 80 cars but 160 cars in the area.

The consultants also sampled entry and exit patterns and came up with what I found to be some interesting numbers. Of the cars that enter MRNP through the Nisqually Entrance, 57% exit via Nisqually Entrance and 43% exit via the Stevens Canyon Entrance. Of the cars that enter at the Stevens Canyon Entrance, 65% exit via the Stevens Canyon Entrance and only 35% exit via the Nisqually Entrance. Obviously, the cars that enter MRNP through the White River entrance and those going to Ipsut Creek and Mowich Lake must exit the same way they enter MRNP.

Because so many visitors do exit MRNP by the same route they entered, the consultants see a good possibility that a system of public transportation (i.e. some form of buses) will work for moving people into and out of MRNP. For example, in the Nisqually Entrance-Paradise-Stevens Canyon Entrance corridor, they envision half the buses traveling from the Nisqually Entrance to Paradise and return-

Continued on page two

IN THIS ISSUE

Now its Time to Plan for People	1
What's Happening at the Park	3

From the Summit cont'd...

much of the typing would be eliminated.

When the editor determines the content of the newsletter is adequate, the newsletter computer files are sent to Bob Landen via modem or on a diskette. Bob does the layout, titles, headings and the other things that make our newsletter look so good (like the bear in the last issue). When Bob is done, the sheets go to the printer.

After printing, the newsletters get labels applied and then they are mailed. In the future Bob Landen and Bob Aegerter may even be able to figure a way to print the addresses directly from the membership list onto the newsletters.

So, is someone out there willing to become the editor of the "MRNPA News"? We need 1) a volunteer, 2) who has a PC with a word processing program he/she is comfortable with (preferably an MS/DOS system) 3) who is willing to do some typing and editing of other people's writing and 4) who as a desire to get involved in MRNPA. (I think it is important for the newsletter editor to attend some of the Board Meetings to get some idea of the current issues facing the Board).

If you are interested, give me or any of the Board Members a call and we will be glad to discuss with you in more detail the rights and responsibilities of being a newsletter editor.

On a somewhat related matter, I was recently given a copy of a letter from two members who expressed their opposition to a issue presented in the newsletter. I wrote them and asked them to write a letter to

the newsletter editor or a newsletter article detailing their feelings. I personally would like to see some feedback from members published in the newsletter and see the newsletter used for discussions pro and con of issues. If you have something to say, please feel free to contribute to the newsletter. If you really would like to contribute, you might even consider volunteering to be the newsletter editor.

People Plans continued...

ing while the other half travel from the Nisqually Entrance to Paradise to the Stevens Canyon Entrance and then returning along the same route.

Before anyone gets too excited pro or con about public transportation in MRNP, be aware there are a myriad of problems to be solved. As examples; How does a system that is only needed 4 months a year (June, July, August, September) pay for itself, particularly if it is only fully utilized on the weekends?

Where is there enough available land to build terminals with ample parking for the cars of the people who get on the buses? Are there buses available that can negotiate the curves and grades inside MRNP at reasonable speeds without creating clouds of exhaust gas pollution? What prevents people from ignoring the public transportation system altogether, so MRNP's roads are further congested by underutilized buses?

How much control of visitor transportation is the NPS willing to exert and how much restrictive management will the public accept? In many ways these are the bottom line questions for any transportation system in MRNP. They are questions that I don't expect will be answered any time soon.

The afternoon session was entirely different from the morning session. The staff at MRNP had invited to this session everyone they could think of who might impact the transportation inside MRNP by the things their organizations were doing outside MRNP. The attendees included representatives from a very wide spectrum: everyone from the City of Tacoma and Pierce Transit to Crystal Mountain and the people proposing to build destination resort at Park Junction (near Tahoma Woods).

Each was asked to give a summary of the activities his or her organization was planning that might impact MRNP. I got pretty uncomfortable during this session. It seemed to me that too many people, organiza-

continued on next page

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The MRNPA News is published periodically by the Mount Rainier National Park Associates of Seattle, WA. for the purpose of providing general information about issues affecting Mount Rainier National Park in furtherance of the goals of the Mount Rainier National Park Associates - *To Maintain, Restore, Nurture, Protect and Appreciate the natural values of Mt. Rainier National Park.*

The opinions expressed in the MRNPA News are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official position of the MRNPA.

Letters and articles from readers and members are welcomed. We reserve the right to edit for length, grammar or libel.

continued from Page 2

tions, and agencies have in mind to bring more and more visitors to the areas surrounding MRNP, to house them and feed them, and then to dump them into MRNP expecting the NPS to entertain them and possibly transport them around MRNP on the dream concept public transportation system that had been discussed in the morning session.

The afternoon session came back on track, in my mind, when MRNP Superintendent Bill Briggie was asked to summarize his view of the discussions. Superintendent Briggie stated first and up front that he was "not here to promote MRNP, I am here to promote the concept of National Parks" and he was willing to talk about visions, but he was more interested in talking about the realities of what is going to and not going to happen at MRNP.

If that hadn't got a lot of people's attention, what he proceeded to say did. He made it very clear that a big portion of NPS revenues are based on the entry fees paid at the gate. More of these entry fees may be returned to the Parks in the future. Thus those promoters expecting the NPS to entertain the visitors that the promoters bring into MRNP should also expect to pay entry fees based on the number of visitors being brought into MRNP.

He stated his opposition to urbanization of the National Parks and assured everyone that there would be no new developments and no new roads built in MRNP. He made it very clear that in his view the threats to MRNP come from outside, not inside, and he was glad that people were coming together to build consensus about reducing some of these threats, but the NPS at MRNP will have the final say about how many and what changes are made inside MRNP.

Superintendent Briggie also made it very clear that the laws governing

use of the National Parks come down on the side of preservation, not utilization, of the National Parks. And finally, relative to any public transportation system, Superintendent Briggie said he wants to delay embarking on a new course of action at MRNP while he observes the changes and results in Yosemite National Park.

In all it was a very interesting day and far more information was presented and discussed than I have been able to summarize here. While I am not in agreement with everything said or proposed, I am glad there is an effort to do something to reduce the impact of the two million plus visitors who flood into MRNP each year.

What's Happening at the Park

Highway 410

Any decision on the design and construction of the section of SR 410 inside the Park has been delayed until 1995 at the earliest due to the search for Marbled Murrelets. However, we have been told informally concerning the current plans, that the reconstructed road will look very much the same as it now looks and that the NPS's concerns about the road design will be recognized more than they were in the previous proposal.

Construction on the section of SR 410 north from the Park boundary to

Fall Closures

State Route 410 and 123 will close at 6:00 a.m. on Monday, November 14, 1994 for the Winter. The earlier dates are due to the continuing construction on the Deadwood Creek bridge.

Reopening in Spring 1995 will be on or before Noon, May 26, 1995 depending on snow removal.

the USFS boundary may be delayed while the Forest Service determines if the tree cutting required for the new construction complies with the new Northwest Forest Plan (Option 9). The duration of the delay seems to be in question. The Forest Service says the review will only take about a month and will not delay the start of the construction (thus giving the impression they have no intention of determining the SR 410 project is in violation of Option 9).

The Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund (SCLDF) has indicated the Forest Service must do an adequate review per Option 9 or SCLDF will file a law suit. (We wonder how much impact all those brightly colored ribbons tied around the trees along SR 410 had in influencing the Forest Service's decision to take some action).

Sunrise Road

On September 6, the Sunrise Road was closed for the season at the White River bridge so that repair and

continued on next page

You are Welcome To Attend A MRNPA Board Meeting

The Board meets the 3rd Thursday of odd-numbered months (November, January, etc..) from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

continued from Page 3

reconstruction could be done at a point about three miles above the bridge where the road crosses a steep ravine. The site is not very affectionately called "Big Dump" because of all the road fill material that has been "dumped" in the ravine. Despite this constant dumping of fill, the ravine is so steep and the earth so unstable that by the middle of this summer earth slides had undermined the asphalt road surface and left two of the guard rail posts hanging in midair. When the work began, no estimate of the completion date could be given.

The plan is to dig down to stable material (about 20 feet) and build a retaining wall to support the roadbed. Do not be surprised if the Sunrise Road opens later than usual next spring. This could turn into a very large project.

Paradise

Work began this spring to rebuild the Paradise water and sewer systems. The comfort station adjacent to the upper parking lot was temporarily closed and replaced by trailers. When the contractor began excavating behind the guide shack, the soil was discovered to be contaminated with oil. The problem was in an area where a

fuel tank was buried that fed the heater for the guide shack. This same area had been used previously to bury other fuel tanks.

To solve this problem and clean the area, approximately 700 cubic yards of contaminated material were removed. This resulted in a construction project that forced closure of most of the trails in the vicinity of the upper parking lot. It also diverted the contractor from working on the sewer system into doing a hazardous material clean-up. Consequently, work on the sewer system is far behind schedule as the summer ends.

The work on the water system did not progress any faster. This contractor accomplished very little of the work scheduled to be completed this summer. The NPS is so displeased with this contractor's performance they may terminate the contract and start over.

As a result, the disruptions that Park visitors found this season in the Paradise upper parking lot and along the trails will be present again next season. None of us are pleased by the garish orange fences blocking our favorite trails through the meadows or by the drone of construction equipment. But, we will endure these inconveniences knowing they will

result in upgraded sewer and water systems capable servicing the more than one million visitors who come to Paradise each year.

Longmire

The service station at Longmire was closed this summer. When the gasoline tanks were dug-up, they were discovered to be leaking. Luckily, the contamination was not found to be threatening the ground water or the Nisqually River. To eliminate the contamination 1,200 cubic yards of material were removed. This material will be cleaned and used to refill the excavation. No trees were lost and the service station building was not damaged. As a result of the Paradise and Longmire experiences, the NPS has re-evaluated their fuel storage needs and will minimize the number of locations within the Park where fuel is stored.

Sunrise Lodge

Earlier this year the NPS completed an evaluation of the current Sunrise Lodge building and decided that the building should be removed and replaced by a new facility on the same site. This decision did not sit well with many people who believe the current building should be restored because of its historic values. To allow the public to comment on the decision, the NPS scheduled public meetings for October 19 in Yakima and October 20 in Tacoma. As of this writing, MRNPA has not taken a position on the issue of restoring or replacing the Sunrise Lodge.

General Management Plan

During the week of November 14 through November 19 the NPS will conduct meetings to accept public comment on the scoping phase of the General Management Plan. The scoping phase determines what topics should be addressed in the GMP. The exact locations and dates are shown in the box at left. MRNPA will submit comments at the meetings.

Schedule of public meetings on the GMP issues at Mt. Rainier		
Date	Location	
Nov 14	Enumclaw	Key Bank - 1212 Cole St
Nov 15	Morton	Morton High School Westlake Ave E
Nov 16	Eatonville	Comm Center - 305 W. Center St
Nov 17	Tacoma	Snake Lake Nature Center - 1919 S. Tyler St
Nov 18	Seattle	The Mountaineers 300 3rd W.
Nov 19	Yakima	Yakima Red Lion Theater Rm 1507 N First St