



A quarterly publication of the Mount Rainier National Park Associates

MRNPA NEWS

Issue #1, February 2000

An Open Letter to the Mount Rainier National Park Associates

from Jon Jarvis our new Superintendent

Last year was Mt. Rainier National Park's centennial, a celebration and recommitment to that incredible vision of the pioneers of the national park idea. This 100th birthday gave us the opportunity to reflect on where we have been and where we are heading for the next century.

Mt. Rainier was this nation's fifth park, a number that has today grown to 378 units in the national park system. The concept of a national park was a wholly original American idea, that wild lands would be set aside, removed from the forces of manifest destiny, no longer viewed as something to conquer but something to be preserved and enjoyed by future generations.

Often called one of the greatest ideas this country ever had, it has been exported to nearly 200 countries where parks systems have grown and thrived.

Let's take a moment to explore this idea of national parks:

Let's look first in the seminal documents of the country: the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution:

The Declaration states there are certain unalienable rights, among these are Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness.

The Preamble to the Constitution states...to form a more perfect Union, establish justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our posterity..

In the phrases is the foundation of the national park idea: the pursuit of happiness...promote the general welfare...secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity.

In 1864, the father of landscape architecture and the creator of central park in New York, Fredrick Law Olmsted wrote: "it is the main duty of government to provide means of protection for all its citizens in the pursuit of happiness. It is a known scientific fact that the occasional contemplation of natural scenes is favorable to the health and vigor of men (and women) and especially to the health and vigor of their intellect...it not only gives them pleasure...but increases the subsequent capacity for happiness and the means of securing happiness."

It was the power and recognition of this idea that created the coalition of minds that set aside Mount Rainier National Park 100 years ago.

This great park idea and the congressional designation was not solely the invention of a few preservationists such as John Muir, but the product of a coalition of environmentalists, business leaders, communities, and the railroad industry that saw parks as an economic opportunities and as places of spiritual renewal.



It was the power of that coalition rallied around a common vision that formed the political will for a park system that has become part of the American heritage.

Our predecessors gave us a rich heritage of parks like Mount Rainier, and no matter how short sighted we can be, if we stand on their shoulders we can see farther. We inherit the unfinished business of parks today and how we can refine their role in the "pursuit of happiness" of society at large. This is not lofty sentiment but a duty of citizenship.

So what are parks today, besides tourist destinations?

They are reservoirs of:

- biological diversity
- linked ecosystems
- regional systems of trails
- protectors of wildlife
- protectors of water and air quality
- places of rejuvenation
- outdoor classrooms
- keepers of our cultural history

My message to you today is we need a renewed commitment to the same kind of coalition between business, industry, advocacy groups, communities and citizens in passionate involvement in the future of Mt. Rainier National Park.

Mt. Rainier looms on our eastern horizon as a classic example of the pressures and issues facing national parks.

We are preparing a Mt. Rainier General Management Plan that lays out its future for the next twenty years. In that plan, we must strike the appropriate balance between use and preservation. If we cannot, the resources, such as the great subalpine flower meadows of Paradise and Sunrise, or the clear water streams of Ohanapecoh, become so diminished that we have failed the stewardship entrusted upon us by the American people.

"The word on the green grapevine is that Jarvis works well with people in communities near the parks, and that he reflects new thinking within a sometimes staid agency."

Helen Engle

Tacoma Audubon Society

In recent years, the National Park Service has recognized that the future of parks like Mount Rainier lies not just within the boundaries where we rescue visitors,

provide interpretation, and restore meadows, but also in the gateway communities and in the regional ecosystem and the regional economy.

So we are directly engaging with business leaders, the tourism industry, gateway communities, tribes, advocacy groups, and friends organizations to bring to the table the array of partnerships, political interests, fiscal resources and volunteerism that the National Park Service cannot provide on its own.

I not have the time in this brief presentation to do more than call for your direct involvement and assistance. Mt. Rainier is facing many issues from the replacement of the Jackson visitor Center to the future of the Carbon River and Westside Roads. As the chief steward of this noble park, I need all of you, as educated and involved constituents, who, along with me, have the responsibility to pass to our children the same Paradise meadow that our parents experienced.

Superintendent Jarvis...

...is no newcomer to the Pacific Northwest. He has worked for 17 years in four northwest national parks. Prior to coming to Mount Rainier, he served tours of duty at North Cascades National Park, Crater Lake National Park, Oregon, Guadalupe Mountains National Park, Texas and Prince Williams Forest Park, Virginia. He was superintendent of Craters of the Moon National Monument in Idaho for four years, and most recently has been superintendent of the nation's largest park (13.2 million-acre) Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve in Alaska since 1994.

Jarvis, 45, is the 17th superintendent of Mount Rainier National Park. Fortunately for us, he beat out at least 15 other candidates for the job.

Observers predict he will bring a fresh style of management. Unlike many park superintendents who rise through the ranks of law enforcement or visitor education, Jarvis's background is in biology and resource management.

The Tacoma News Tribute said it well, "That puts him among a new breed of park superintendents steeped in the lessons of modern ecology and convinced of the power of science to help solve conflicts that arise from the agency's perennial struggle to balance public use with protection of the natural environment."

"A native of Virginia, Jarvis learned his love of nature from his father an avid outdoorsman. After earning a degree in biology at the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg, he joined the Park Service in 1976. His first job was staffing an information booth in Washington, D.C. during the U.S. bicentennial."

He and his wife Paula have two children.

From the Summit

Rob Stoker, President
Mount Rainier National Park Associates

Well, this is my first "From the Summit" article and I have to admit that I'm not really on the summit. In fact, I've never actually stood on the summit. It's one of my goals for the year though, and hopefully I'll be able to write a true "From the Summit" article later in the year.

It's been a interesting year for Mt. Rainier National Park. The 100th anniversary came and went and Bill Briggie retired. (We should all thank Bill for his efforts over the past years.) As the park celebration was going on, a search for the new superintendent was also being conducted during the first half of 1999. Jon Jarvis became the Superintendent this past summer. We were fortunate to have Jon speak at our annual meeting this past September. At the meeting, Jon spoke mostly about himself and his past experiences at Wrangell-St Elias National Park. I'm looking forward to hearing more from Jon about his views on Mt. Rainier and on the direction he plans on taking the park during his tenure as Superintendent.

Our group still has a lot of work ahead of us this year. As always, we will do several trail parties. John Titland has set the dates for our work parties and you can find information on them in this newsletter. Perhaps the most important thing we do this year will be to comment on the park's new General Management Plan. A draft of the GMP is due out soon. This is our opportunity to influence the way the Park will be managed for the next 20 years. It's something we should not take lightly. I encourage everyone to get involved.

Speaking of involvement... We need to be thinking of officers for the upcoming year. In particular, we need someone to step up and be president-elect. If you are interested in getting involved, or interested in just letting me know about your feelings about the GMP (when it comes out), please drop me a line at:

Rob Stoker
17650 134th Ave. SE #H-302
Renton, WA 98058

Now, try to get out to the park and enjoy it. It's a great place to visit in the winter and there are a lot fewer people around. You can even find a parking space at Paradise.

-Rob

This Year's Offices and Board:

Serving this year are:

President: Rob Stoker
Treasurer: Bob Aegerter
Secretary: Jan Stoker
Past President: Dave Berry
President-Elect: (This post is open).

Board Members are:

Sheryl Bailey
Bob Barger
Jeff Goulden
Margie Goulden
Steve McDonald
Randy Payne
Howard Selmer
Pauline Steputis
John Thompson
Yolanda Thompson
John Titland

New Mount Rainier Website Worth Seeing

There's a new Mount Rainier web site featuring some of the most beautiful photography of our favorite mountain you've ever seen.

It's the home page of Mike Gauthier, head climbing and mountain rescue ranger at the mountain. Mike is not only a skilled climber, but a talented photographer and writer.

In addition to the web site, Mike has a new book out, "Mount Rainier: A Climbing Guide". We will review the book in our next issue. Meanwhile for those who can't wait, you can order a signed copy by sending \$20 to Mike Gauthier, P.O. Box 205, Ashford, WA 98304.

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 Mount Rainier National Park Associates - to Maintain, Restore, Nurture, Protect and Appreciate the natural values of Mount Rainier National Park.

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

Letters and articles from members and readers are welcomed. We reserve the right to edit for length or libel. A grammar articles and comments can be sent to:

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illustration by MRNPA member Bob Barger

NPS Director Stanton Comes to Mount Rainier

The Centennial Celebration was highlighted by the visit of NPS Director Robert G. Stanton. The following is his remarks:

"Thank you, Jon, for your kind introduction, and I congratulate you on your appointment as the new superintendent of Mount Rainier National Park.

Senator Gorton, Representative Dicks, Representative Baird, Mr. Lonnie Selam, Mr. Reynolds, Superintendent Jarvis, ladies and gentlemen - and a special greeting to the young people.

It is my distinct honor and privilege to be here today to share in this great milestone for a very special place. I want to thank all who have made this day possible. I particularly want to thank Senator Gorton, Representative Gorton, Representative Dicks and Representative Baird for being with us today and for their continued support of our national parks in the U.S. Congress. Gentlemen, thank you!

I, too, want to recognize Bill Briggles, former Superintendent of Mount Rainier and former Deputy Director of the National Park Service, and to thank him for his leadership and support for the parks and programs of the National Park Service over many years.

Furthermore, on behalf of the National Park Service, we are grateful to Representative Jennifer Dunn and Ms. Jean Tobin for serving as the honorary co-chairs for the Mount Rainier Centennial

observation. We also certainly owe a great deal of thanks to our volunteers and employees and alumni for making today possible.

Mount Rainier National Park is one of the most striking symbols of natural America. The mountain is a looming presence over the vast urban corridor along the eastern edge of Puget Sound. Literally millions of people can see Mount Rainier - not in the rain perhaps, but often, very often.

Mount Rainier National Park is a symbol of foresight. A full century ago, when Seattle was a bustling seaport - but just beginning its rise to prominence - and Tacoma was in the budding stage, few saw the booming growth that would come. Yet unlike so many places where we don't know development was coming until it got there, HERE the people of the nation decided to protect this most stunning landscape while it was still undeveloped.

Here, our predecessors knew, was a prize worth saving. What they did a century ago is almost as remarkable as the place they did it for. Think back to a time when even the founding of the National Park Service was still almost a full generation into the future, Think of a time of determined pioneers, looking for new worlds to conquer. In 1899, many of those who first came west in covered wagons were looking for new opportunity.

How remarkable it is, in the context of their time, that our ancestors could have recognized the need to save this place, to set it aside for the children of a new century then looming as close as the mountain itself.

So we have been very fortunate. We have inherited this great place because people who are now safely shrouded in history thought to give us this gift.

I think it is appropriate that we use this time to reflect not only on what we have received, but also on what we will pass along. This is not simply a question for the new millennium. We should be thinking in terms of what will be here for the 22nd century and the 23rd. We will have dishonored our legacy if we are not prepared to protect it, preserve it, and pass it on to succeeding generations.

We have a plan to do that not just for Mount Rainier, but for all of the national parks. I'll leave the discussion of specific ideas for this park's future to another time and place. That's important - in fact, it is very important - but today I want to briefly outline our recommitment to the stewardship of the natural resources throughout the National Park System.

I am here to tell you about my dedication, on behalf of the men and women of the National Park Service, and with the enthusiastic support of Secretary Babbitt and Assistant Secretary Don Barry, to a Natural Resources Management Challenge that encompasses our strong commitment to preserving our precious natural resources.

Why have we chosen to do this now? Because there is no better time than the present. We can't change the past and the future isn't soon enough. Today is the time.

America's National Park System has had a purpose for a very long time. It was defined in law in 1916 when the Congress created the National Park Service: "The Service thus established shall promote and regulate the use of the Federal areas known as national parks, monuments and reservations hereinafter specified by such means and measures as conform to the fundamental purpose of the said parks, monuments and reservations, which purpose is to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wild life therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations."

The founders of the National Park Service were staunch advocates for expanding opportunities for use of the parks. Steven Mather was the first director and

he taught us that we needed visitors because it was their personal understanding and experience that would teach America that its parks had value. Director Mather observed that "He or she is a better citizen with a keener appreciation of living here - in the United States - who has toured the national parks." Mr. Mather oversaw development of visitor facilities in parks and transportation systems outside them that would deliver visitors to appreciate what we had, both here at Mount Rainier and across the other parks and monuments that had been entrusted to his management.

Soon, the National Park Service developed a great role in historic preservation. We had seen that this nation was aging and its history included people, places, and events that deserved remembrance and protection. The man-made structures we preserve demonstrate the values of community and diversity that link us with the heritage of our predecessors and our legacy to our successors. They include the historic homes of civil rights, political, and corporate leaders. They include great national icons such as the Statue of Liberty and Independence Hall. They are also the way stations on the migration routes of a dynamic, expanding nation. Here in Washington, National Park Service historical sites tell the story of the Klondike Gold Rush, the exploration and settlement of the Puget Sound, and the fur trade which involved both settlers and American Indians.

It takes an all-out effort to preserve human works, whether they are forts, churches, petroglyphs, or artifacts.

Natural landscapes are different, however. Here the issues are so complex, the interplay of forces so dynamic, that it is often hard to know where to begin - or when to leave things alone.

Now we must recommit ourselves to natural resource preservation and restoration. It is one of my central goals that we will do so. And I am convinced that it cannot be so without strong, effective science-based programs.

Over the years, we have realized things weren't what they should be. So we began to re-examine our various policies on the management of natural resources in national parks. In 1963, Starker Leopold led a committee that set the stage for change within the Park Service. That report urged that scientific research "form the basis for all management programs" and that "every phase of management" come under the "full jurisdiction of biologically trained personnel."

natural gifts in the national parks on to future generations if we can better understand them today.

The National Park Service will meet these complex challenges. The natural world encompasses millions of species, many still unknown; and the interrelationships of many of those that are known remain puzzling and mysterious.

The Natural Resources Management Challenge is the framework for preserving these resources for years to come. Our actions must be informed, and disciplined. It must be derived from careful consideration of the ripple effects our actions will have throughout the natural community.

America's National Park System has been described as the greatest set of outdoor classrooms the world has ever seen. But the educational value of those classrooms will be lost if we fail to recognize they are simultaneously the greatest set of natural laboratories. It is the study of nature's boundless variety and unlimited activity that will give us an ever-expanding source of knowledge and information.

The information that we gather is not idle facts and curious statistics, it is the underlying substance that will allow us to make informed decisions and take informed actions in the parks and to inspire similar decisions and actions outside the parks.

The goal of preserving some of the nation's most precious resources is the foundation of National Park System management, law and policy and it inspires Americans. As expressed by President Theodore Roosevelt - "Nothing short of defending this country during wartime compares in importance with the great central task of leaving this land even a better land for our descendants than it is for us."

We are the stewards of lands and landscapes. We have a responsibility to keep Mount Rainier - and all the other parks -- a living presence for not just one more century, but for many more centuries. It will not be possible without a whole-hearted commitment to science-based management of these great places that have been entrusted to us.

In closing, allow me again to congratulate all who have made this celebration of Mount Rainier National Park's Centennial Anniversary possible. And I trust you, too, share my belief that Mount Rainier and other national park areas provide opportunities and experiences that awaken the potential in each of us to become better stewards.

Thank you.

Robert Stanton

Work Parties 1999 and 2000

Two years ago the Board of Mount Rainier National Park Associates decided that MRNPA's contribution to the Centennial Year celebrations should be to expand the maintenance and revegetation work we perform from three work parties to six work parties in a year. The Park was anticipating an increase in number of visitors during the centennial year and the Board felt we could do our part by doing more of what we already do.

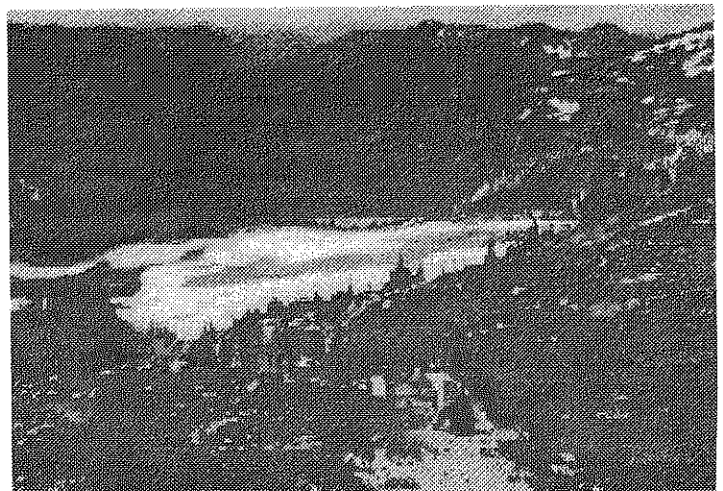
Among our projects in 1998, we were largely responsible for reopening the Huckleberry Creek Trail where it had been unmaintained for several years, we worked on building some of the new "Missing Mile" portion of the Wonderland Trail between the White River road and White River Campground, and in the fall we were part of a small army of volunteers planting something over 5000 seedlings at the revegetation project at Sunrise.

As we all know 1999, the Centennial Year, did not turn out as anyone expected. Winter snows covered the Park far deeper than normal. Avalanches destroyed sections of Highway 410. Park crews no sooner finished one rescue or search operation when they were called out for the next. When the Centennial celebration took place at Paradise in August, the meadows were still covered by snow. Summer arrived for about two weeks in September.

And what happened to the MRNPA work parties? They went on as scheduled and everyone involved had a great time! Because of the late snow melt out, the early season work parties all took place in the Carbon River Valley. MRNPA volunteers made a major upgrade of the nature trail at the Carbon River entrance, including putting down 10 cubic yards of crushed rock on the trail surface. MRNPA volunteers also worked on the Carbon Glacier Trail, clearing blowdowns and slides, and on the Green Lake Trail, almost totally rebuilding about a quarter mile of trail that was deeply eroded and trenched.

In July, six incredibly hardy and devoted MRNPA volunteers braved an entire day of unrelenting rain working on a section of the Wonderland Trail just above Longmire. The reports I received from two independent sources were that the clothing these folks were wearing was so wet and muddy that it took a garden hose treatment before the original colors could be identified.

In August MRNPA volunteers again worked on the "Missing Mile" project, building a log foot bridge and finishing and grooming the new trail surface for several hundred yards. (We will likely get to work on this project again in 2000 because the White River Campground is not yet in sight from the end of the trail.) This pleasant day was completed at a group potluck dinner eaten standing under a tarp watching an almost incredible amount of rain falling out of the bottom of a thunderstorm.



A 1999 work party doing revegetation at Panorama Point

Photo by Steven R. McDonald

In September MRNPA volunteers assisted at Paradise (the snow was out of most of the meadows) planting seedlings at Panorama Point. The day was as beautiful as the days in July and August had been rainy, completing the year on a high for everyone involved.

In 1999, a total 33 different people put in 480 man-hours of volunteer labor, the equivalent of one full time employee working 40 hours week for 12 weeks. And we only worked on Saturdays! In the spring, when the Park trail crews were participating in several search operations, Carl Fabiani, NPS trails supervisor, told me the only people doing any trail maintenance in the Park were MRNPA volunteers.

For 2000. The Board of MRNPA has decided to reduce the number of scheduled work parties from six to four. There is a possibility that we will also conduct one or two more work parties that will be arranged on short notice. The dates for scheduled work parties are: Saturday, April 15, Sat. June 10, Sat., August 12 work party and potluck dinner, Sunday August 13 group hike

Saturday, September 9 revegetation work party

I know these dates are too far in the future to remember, so if you are interested in participating in any of the work parties in the coming year. Give me a call at 425-757-1698 or contact me by e-mail at jandjt@mindspring.com. I will add your name to the list of volunteers and send you reminders before the parties.

Come join us.

John Titland
Work Parties Coordinator

A Field Report from our man really in the field...

John Thompson

For those who don't know John, he and his lovely wife Yolanda (both founding members of MRNPA) live closer to the mountain than any other people on the north side. Theirs is the last house on the Carbon River Road, which usually makes them the first to know what's going on upstream.

Well the big news is that new, nicer toilets are being installed at the entrance. They are on the left as you face the Ranger's office. (Used to be front yard.) Troubles beset the contractor immediately. Much old 'piping' in the ground, going in all directions, and worse, a sheen of oil on the water in the ditches and pits. Should put a good tang in that bottled mountain water collected downstream!

There has been quite a bit of vandalism on our side of the park this winter. There was vandalism at the gate, with windows torn out, and also on the way up to Mowich. The big sign board at the Paul Peak trail was ripped out and used for firewood. Maybe it's time to install solar-powered, motion-detector activated surveillance cameras at popular vandalism spots. Amongst the snapshots of curious deer and bear tripping the lens, we may get a mug shot of some two-legged bears.

There's a lot of snow at our place covering the black ice. Yolanda and I are pretty much hibernating until the roads improve.

Fortunately the proposed 640-acre land swap between Pierce County and a Gig Harbor logger/developer has been stopped for the time being. In addition, the plan was to swap a 420 acre parcel of valuable DNR land (the corner of which touches our property) with Plum Creek. It was a terribly unfair swap, and one action we must keep an eye on, since the plan will undoubtedly rear it's ugly head again.

The last I heard, the Tahoma Land Trust was hoping to keep these 1000+ acres from being logged. With talk that some day, Mount Rainier National Park would be enlarged, that would definitely be a good solution which would save the land.

One final concern, is a disease which is devastating Oregon forests, and I'm concerned about it moving north. It's called Swiss Needlecast and it infects Douglas Fir trees. It is a fungal disease which increased by 41 percent between May 1998 and May 1999. The total infestation in Oregon covers 295,000 acres. Last year's loss in growth on the (Oregon) commercial forestlands surveyed was 43 million board feet, compared with expected normal yield in uninfected Douglas Fir plantations.

The epidemic spreads as spores from a microscopic fungi flood the air hitting not only young plantations, but mature Doug Fir in older stands as well. When foresters get on the ground, they find yellowing needles everywhere. The fungus plugs the inside of needles and shuts down photosynthesis, the process that makes food for plants. It's like taking away 80 percent of a tree's food-producing machinery.

Not only does a stricken tree stop making wood, it also shuts down growth of the vascular system needed to get water to the top of the tree. Some foresters report that they've seen infected trees dead near the top, or with physical problems associated with limited water carrying capacity. There's speculation that trees caught up in the epidemic will be stressed and vulnerable to other disease.

Swiss needlecast is serious business, and our valley is not immune. Since this is an "inland" rainforest and we have nearly the same flora as the Oregon Coast, we may be next if it's not already here. I've talked to Plum Creek about it, and was told they are 'watching it.' They said there are a couple timber companies near the coast (Simpson somewhere near Hoquium for one) which have plowed under some young Doug fir plantations and planted mixed conifer.

Along our road we have some yellowing trees, but I haven't done the detailed research yet. For years I've ranted to the country, state and feds about the mono-culture forests. Still not much interest. But this may impact MORA being encircled by Doug fir plantations. I think MRNPA should join MORA vigorously in MORA's new interest in what is going on around the park. (And since Congress did spring loose some money for Park use, now is the time to bring up 'neighboring problems.')

I'm biased, but I think I'd take the same position if I lived in Ballard or Bellingham.

Finally, late last summer the Pierce County Rails to Trails group conducted a field trip up here where they gathered proponents of several supportive groups, and took them to the old railroad beds where the trail would be. It's a particularly interesting route, especially where it goes under the high Carbon Bridge.