



# MRNPA NEWS

Volume 8 Number 2 June 1995

## From the Summit

Spring is upon us. It's time to apply a fresh coat of waterproofing to the hiking boots, clean out the day pack, and plan this year's trips to Mount Rainier.

Last spring I challenged MRNPA members to be Park watchdogs by spending more time in the Park and by going to places they had not previously explored. This season the challenge may be to reach the places we all know so well. The construction projects at Paradise promise to create a mess, closing several trails and reducing the capacity of the already overcrowded parking lots. The road work on SR 410 and the Sunrise Road will undoubtedly cause traffic delays and backups. Work on the Fairfax Bridge near Carbonado will block access to Carbon River and Mowich Lake during the week and will likely cause problems during the weekends.

Regardless of the disruption, I am not going to complain about maintenance projects in the Park. My observation is that they are long overdue. MRNPA could easily identify additional projects needed to protect the Park and reduce visitor impacts. I will suggest, however, that this may be the year to explore those really interesting and out of the way places in the Park that you always wanted to explore but didn't because you went to Paradise or Mowich Lake instead.

Also I previously pointed out that as we watchdog Mount Rainier National Park we must be aware that some of the biggest threats to the Park do not come from activities taking place within the Park but from events taking place outside the Park

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## Wetlands Slow Elbe Project

by Van Perdue

Developers of the proposed Park Junction Resort 3 miles outside Elbe got a rude shock when the required wetlands delineation was completed. Pac-Tech Engineering, hired by the developers to delineate wetlands on the site, found that eleven wetlands and the required buffers occupy one-quarter of the entire 400-acre site. The owners replaced Pac-Tech with David Evans Associates, but the new consultant apparently found substantially the same results.

Representatives from Pierce County Planning and Land Services (PALS) visited the site with representatives from the U. S. Corps of Engineers, the U. S. Soil Conservation Service, David Evans Associates, and one of the property owners April 13-14 to verify the wetland boundaries. The Corps of Engineers representative found the wetland delineation missed some wetlands, and the group is scheduled to meet again May 9 to iron out the differences.

The owners want authority to split the largest wetland into lower category wetlands which would require smaller buffers under Pierce County Wetland Regulations. The Department of Ecology discourages such splitting of wetlands other than Category 1 wetlands.

Reading through the wetlands report prepared by Pac-Tech provides an image of the wetlands far different from that drawn for the MRNPA board at its April meeting. Promoters told the board they "had no idea a little bit of wet pasture" would have such a dramatic impact on the project design. Promoters also told the board the pro-

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boundaries. When I made that observation I was not thinking the biggest threats would be coming from as far away as Washington, DC, but that is clearly turning out to be the case.

Considering how hostile the Republican members of the Washington State Delegation are to all environmental issues, I do not expect any of them to be a friend to Mount Rainier National Park. So this year, the most important watchdogging we do may be keeping a close eye on Congress.

Despite politics taking place in Washington, D. C. and despite the construction projects in and around the Park, I still plan to put on those hiking boots, shoulder that day pack, and do a major portion of my watchdogging while in the Park. The big trees and the glacier lilies, the varied thrushes and the mountain goats, and most of all the Mountain, always make it clear to me why I come and why our efforts to preserve the Park are worthwhile.

I hope you will join me. See you in the Park.

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ject has been redesigned to accommodate the wetlands delineation, but the effort to split the wetlands seems to counter that notion.

The 11 wetlands in the project area are far from a "wet pasture," according to the wetland scientists who prepared the report. They found that the largest of the wetlands, some 58 acres in extent, is predominantly a forested system to the north and an emergent system to the south, which extends off-site to the west.

The scientists reported that several of the wetlands, including the largest, are supported by groundwater discharge through seeps and springs. They said this largest wetland, along with one other, also are fed by intermittent drainage swales running into them.

The Pac-Tech report also leaves a clue as to why the owners changed wetlands consultants. The report states "In this case the impact is the result of an extensive resort community in an area that currently has a couple of houses, barns, garages [Some text apparently was deleted here] There could also be a direct loss of wetland areas due to filling activities necessary for the proposed development plan.

"Ideally the best alternative is to avoid wetlands altogether and minimize the potential impacts by establishing the natural undisturbed buffers of 50 to 100 feet for each area depending on the wetland category. *However, this would make the proposed project unfeasible.*"

The developers are submitting individual chapters of the DEIS to PALS as they are completed and have told PALS to expect a flood of chapters in May. PALS will review the DEIS in its entirety before publishing it for public review and comment. The review for legal sufficiency and administrative correctness may take several months, and it could be this fall before the DEIS is available for public review and comment.

There have been other developments (no pun intended) connected to the project.

The developers have made the round of environmental organizations trying to ferret out potential avenues of op-

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## Officers of MRNPA

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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.

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## Be a VIP Volunteer this year in Mount Rainier!

If you have some time, try being a part of the Mount Rainier experience. Contact Dixie or Clay Gatchel, MRNP Volunteer Coordinators at (360) 569-2211 ext. 3389.

**Lots of opportunities!**

**- from repair and maintenance to meadow rovers.**



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position. They have appeared before the Tahoma Audubon Society and the Sierra Club in addition to the MRNPA board. At the MRNPA board meeting the spokesman confirmed an estimate in the environmental checklist submitted with the initial application that vehicle traffic to the park would be increased by about five percent, but claimed that most of the increase will be during the winter months. In a revised environmental checklist the question of traffic increases was deferred to studies to be done as part of the DEIS process.

It seems curious the developers expect their resort will primarily attract winter traffic. The only features the resort offers that don't currently exist in the area are an 18-hole golf course and some tennis courts. It hardly seems credible that cross-country ski trails that have existed several years will suddenly attract thousands more skiers because there are 300 more hotel rooms in the area.

Substantial opposition to the resort exists in the local community, and it is being lead by an organization named Rural Citizens Against Urban Sprawl, or R-CAUS, the organization primarily responsible for cancellation of plans for a new regional airport in eastern Pierce County. Only two letters supporting the project are on file at PALS while there are dozens of letters expressing opposition.

Will the Park Junction Resort happen? We'll see. The Adams family has been acquiring property for the project for 16 years and they're very determined. It remains to be seen whether they are more determined than their neighbors.

## **Polly Dyer Receives Award**

The UW Retirement Association nominated Polly Dyer, a life-long conservation activist and board member of MRNPA, for an environmental award by Seattle/King County Senior Services, and she won it!

At the Cycle of Life-Intergenerational Festival held May 4th at the Center House, Polly was named the Environmentalist of the Year, receiving the Seattle-King County Generations United 1995 "Hand in Hand" award. Polly's many years of participation at all levels were critical to the creation of the Olympic Marine Sanctuary, the North Cascades National Park, and the Wilderness Act.

## **National Park Service Reorganizes**

In the most significant organizational change in the agency's 79-year history, National Park Service (NPS) Director Roger Kennedy announced on May 15, 1995, that the NPS immediately will begin implementing a major reorganization now that Congressional approval has been received.

The reorganization plan, slated for completion by 1999, responds to diverse changes and challenges confronting the NPS for several decades and to the Administration's National Performance Review goal of reducing the size of the federal government while improving efficiency.

"Our overall desire is to work smarter and more efficiently in carrying out our job of protecting parks," said Kennedy. "We believe this can be accomplished best by eliminating administrative layering, reducing the size of central offices, and placing the personnel and resources in the field where we serve the visitor and protect the places given into our charge."

In making the announcement, Kennedy also named seven field directors to head the Alaska, Pacific West, Intermountain, Midwest, National Capital, Northeast and Southeast field offices. These new field offices will be significantly fewer and smaller than the former regional offices, with staffs of approximately 18-25 by 1999 (regions formerly had more than 150 employees). System Support Offices, made up of a cadre of professionals, will be maintained in Seattle, Santa Fe and Boston.

## **Report from the Carbon, April 1995**

*by John Thompson*

*(Ed Note: While the 'latest' schedule appears to allow for weekend openings, John's report is still a timely view of the 'process'....)* In current parlance, there is 'no definitive' answer to the question of the O'Farrell Bridge repair schedule. The contractor has apparently submitted an optional plan of attack for the state to review, according to Jack Washington, key WSDOT project manager..

Though Mr. Washington wouldn't comment on the proposed alternative, other sources told a valley business owner that the work plan would only take out a ten foot section at a time. Further, the contractor would span the out section, possibly providing a 10 minutes per hour break for local traffic.

While the state held to the May 13 close date (obviously questionable as it is a Saturday and my wedding anniversary...), I still believe they will wait until after Carbonado Schools close on June 13th. *(ED Note: You called it right, John!)*

The Ipsut Creek Campground road on the other hand is open as usual. And as usual, it is slightly better than bad. The Mowich? Who knows. Yolanda and I will try to keep you up-to-date on the Carbon River roads.



## MRNPA Trail Building - A Fieldwork Success

by Dick Baker

Q. How many MRNPA members and friends would it take to replace a dangerous slippery wooden ramp?

A. Nineteen! If they all worked really hard for four hours.. And they would have fun in the sun and fresh air by a gorgeous waterfall in doing it.

A beautiful Saturday on 5/20/95 found nineteen of us meeting the Park Trail Crew leader in the Carbon River Campground. We hiked with tools and lunches up the trail from the parking lot for a mile and a half. After a safety lecture, we carried out the five step process of bridge-building in MRNP that Carl Fabiani, now director of trail maintenance, has put in place.

This was the third bridge I have helped build in the Park and I have learned to appreciate the results: a permanent, natural-appearing safe bridge that does not require rebuilding every several years. The process consists of:

- 1) Remove old bridge and put rotten wood out of sight or tote it out
- 2) Fill the base with large rocks
- 3) Place a layer of medium-sized rocks
- 4) Cover with lots of gravel
- 5) Finish with lots of sand or clay dirt.

I hope you can read between the lines above that we did a whole hecko-falotta schlepping of rocks and dirt in sacks from the nearby stream and forest.

Popular songs for this gruntwork were "16 tons; Mr. Sandman...; HiHo HiHo, it's off to work we go" and the dirge from "Wizard of Oz". Remembering the name of the seventh dwarf (Bashful) also took some time.

We rapidly made the downhill hike out, like horses to the barn. The reward, in this case, was lying in the

sun on the lawn of John and Yolanda Thompson's gorgeous place near the Carbon River Entrance.

Don't miss all this fun and work for the Park: The next trailwork is August 12-13. We will meet at 9 a.m. at the Cougar Rocks Campground bulletin board. Saturday will be the workday on whatever project needs us. We will have a group campsite for Saturday night and a potluck for Saturday evening. Sunday is free for hikes and the drive back.

The last volunteer trail workday this year is planned as a revegetation project near Paradise on September 16.

## Construction Projects in the Park Spring/Summer/Fall 1995

*Summarized from information provided by the N.P.S.*

### Laughingwater Creek Bridge Replacement

*Located on SR 123 near the Ohanapcosh Campground*

The new bridge is complete and in use. In early summer the contractor will remove the remaining parts of the old bridge, grade the site to final contours, and revegetate the area. The estimated completion date is August. Intermittent, short term delays of traffic are expected.

### Deadwood Creek Bridge Replacement

*Located on SR 410 near the White River-Sunrise Road junction*

The new bridge is not currently complete. It is the intention of the contractor to complete construction and have the bridge ready for use by May 27. Other work will continue at the site through the summer. Intermittent short term delays of traffic are expected.

### Sunrise Road Repair

*Located approximately one mile beyond the White River Campground Road junction*

Erosion of the downhill slope was undercutting the road. Construction of a retaining wall to stop the erosion was completed last fall. Reconstruction of the roadway will begin after snow melt-out this spring. The road is expected to open to traffic on or about June 23. The final roadway surfacing will be done sometime mid-summer. Intermittent short term delays of traffic are expected.

### Paradise Water Treatment, Sewage Collections and Wastewater Treatment Systems

*Located in the Paradise area*

Construction to upgrade these systems continues and is expected to be on-going through the entire year. As last year, construction activities in the upper Paradise parking lot will eliminate some of the parking. Construction activities along the Myrtle Fall-Edith Creek and Golden Gate trails will cause these trails to be closed all summer. Expect traffic and parking problems.

### Henry M. Jackson Visitor Center

*Located at Paradise*

Work is scheduled to begin this summer on the first phase of the rehabilitation of the Visitor Center. Phase I of the rehabilitation involves the repair or replacement roof sections and repair and painting of the exterior concrete surfaces. In addition, a feasibility study will be undertaken to evaluate this 30 plus year old structure. Phase I will begin in late May and is scheduled to last through October. Minor inconvenience can be expected in the area. Construction activities will eliminate some parking in the lower Paradise parking lot.

### National Park Inn

*Located at Longmire*

Work will be underway this summer to improve the landscaping around

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the National Park Inn. Minor inconvenience can be expected in the area.

### **Kautz Creek Visitor Use Area**

*Located four miles east of the Nisqually Entrance*

Construction is scheduled to get underway following the Labor Day weekend, September 5, for general improvements to the Kautz Creek Visitor Use area. Minor inconvenience can be expected in the area.

### **Sunshine Point Campground and Picnic Area**

*Located 1/4 mile east of the Nisqually Entrance*

Work is scheduled to get underway late this summer for general improvement to the Sunshine Point Campground and Picnic Area. Minor inconvenience can be expected in the area.

### **Outside the Park**

#### **State Route 410 Reconstruction**

*Located north of MRNP Boundary*

Work has begun on the road reconstruction. All appeals to stop the work were exhausted when Judge Dyer found that the project met the parameters of the Clinton Administration's Northwest Forest Plan. Expect delays

up to 30 minutes due to road construction.

### **Fairfax Bridge Repair**

*Located on SR 165 two miles east of Carbonado*

The bridge deck is to be replaced and structural members of the bridge are to be repaired. From mid-May to June 12 intermittent, short term road closures near the bridge are planned. From June 13 to August 27, the plan was to have the bridge closed to all traffic from 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. daily, including weekends. It now appears that the bridge will be closed only on weekdays. On Saturdays and Sundays the bridge is to be open all day. Because of the extensive work being done to the bridge, the delays may be longer than planned. Park facilities at Carbon River and Mowich Lake will be open to the public as usual throughout the entire period.

## **THE MOUNTAIN THAT WAS GOD**

*A compilation By Jeff Goulden*

Over the centuries Mount Rainier has meant many things to many people. To the early natives who lived and hunted at its base, the mountain was a place of awe and reverence, known as

Tahoma, "the Mountain that was God." The first Europeans to view the mountain saw it as a landmark, a place to be named. The first white men to visit the mountains surrounds were attracted by its natural splendor and beauty. Early climbers were attracted by the challenge of being first on top. The thousands of climbers who attempt to reach the summit today are drawn by the physical challenge and spirit of adventure. Today's casual tourist, who drives around the mountain in a day and makes their only stop at a visitor center, sees the mountain as a splendid tourist attraction.

Primitive people everywhere have deified superlatives of nature. Mount Rainier with its wondrous bulk and moody presence was no exception. All of the tribes within sight of the mountain called Tahoma, or "The Great Snow," considered it a power to be feared. Even after they were converted to Christianity, they continued to regard the mountain with awe and reverence.

According to the legend of the Skokomish people, Mount Rainier was once the wife of Brothers Mountain on the Olympic Peninsula. According to the story, she ate so much and grew so fat that the Olympic peaks no longer had room for her. She then

*Continued on next page*

# **Attend A MRNPA Board Meeting!**

## **The next meeting is**

## **at 7:00 P.M. on July 20, 1995**

## **Call John Titland (206) 747-1698**

## **for location**



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packed her basket and set out for a new land, hoping that her husband would call her back. She climbed the highest peaks and looked back but her husband gave no sign to call her. Giving up all hope she climbed a final hill and scattered flowers, berries, marmots and rivers from her basket. She stretched tall so that she could see her old home and lifted her son so that he could also see. Mount Rainier and her son, Little Tahoma remain apart from the other peaks to this day. There is not much evidence of primitive inhabitancy around Mount Rainier. A six thousand year old projectile point was uncovered during construction of the Stevens Canyon Road. A primitive shelter cave with stone knives and scrapers was found near Summerland above the White River. During the last several centuries, Indians began using the sub-alpine meadows for gathering herbs, berries, medicinal roots and grasses for weaving. The men did some hunting for deer, elk, goat and grouse, but harvesting was the primary activity. When the hunting and gathering were finished for the summer, the Indians burned the meadows to keep the brush and seedlings from encroaching.

On his way to negotiate with the Spanish at Nootka Sound, Captain George Vancouver explored and

mapped Puget Sound. His logbook for May 7, 1792, mentions "a remarkably high, round mountain covered with snow." This was the first written account of Mount Rainier. On May 8, after rounding Marrowstone Point, the mountain again came into view and Vancouver named it: "The weather was serene and pleasant and the country continued to exhibit between us and the eastern snowy range the same luxuriant appearance with the round snowy mountain now forming its southern extremity, and which, after my friend, Rear Admiral Peter Rainier, I distinguish by the name of Mount Rainier." Rainier was a career sailor who gained rank after capturing an American privateer during the Revolutionary War. The early citizens of Washington Territory were much chagrined that the mountain was named after Rainier, but the name has remained. Fourteen years after Vancouver named the mountain, Lewis and Clark recorded seeing it while returning up the Columbia River.

It was not until forty-one years after Vancouver's discovery of the mountain that a European was able to make a close approach. By then the Hudson's Bay Company had established a fur trading post at Fort Nisqually near the present town of Dupont. Doctor William Fraser Tolmie was the medical officer for the fort and an amateur botanist. In 1833, accompanied by five Indians and three horses, he led a

"botanizing excursion" to the northwest edge of what is now Mount Rainier National Park. Besides studying botanical species and gathering medicinal herbs, Doctor Tolmie made some close observations of the mountain. Doctor Tolmie's account, however, grossly underestimated the actual size of the mountain. He stated "A few small glaciers were seen on the conical portion; below that the mountain is composed of bare rock for a distance of about fifty feet down to the valley beneath. The Poyallip was fenced in to the eastward by a wall or dyke which seemed four feet high and four hundred feet in length." Although his observations were in error, Doctor Tolmie was probably the first white man to document the existence of glaciers in the area.

*To Be Continued*

## SR 410 Update

Planning on the SR 410 reconstruction within the boundaries of Mount Rainier National Park continues but the project remains on hold this summer pending completion and evaluation of spotted owl and marbled murrelet surveys along the highway corridor.

In a positive development, funds to complete the reconstruction project have been identified within the Federal Government. Washington State Department of Transportation funds are no longer needed. Thus Washington DOT can no longer dictate the standards and parameters for lane widths, shoulder configurations, distance to the first tree, etc. The road will be reconstructed according to National Park road standards.

We therefore expect a far less extensive and destructive reconstruction than was originally proposed. We are being told that a new proposal for reconstruction of this section of SR 410 should be available for public review and comment this coming fall or winter.

### MRNP Visitors - 1994

| <u>Month</u> |         |
|--------------|---------|
| Jan .....    | 39,555  |
| Feb .....    | 31,086  |
| Mar .....    | 53,591  |
| Apr .....    | 38,084  |
| May .....    | 82,768  |
| Jun .....    | 266,731 |
| Jul .....    | 542,527 |
| Aug .....    | 523,040 |
| Sep .....    | 374,184 |
| Oct .....    | 188,763 |
| Nov .....    | 34,174  |
| Dec .....    | 31,580  |



With its lofty summit pushing up into the sky and its massive glaciers carving its flanks, Mount Rainier dominates the Pacific Northwest. Recognizing the scenic splendor of this magnificent mountain and of the high meadowed ridges and the virgin forests that surrounded it, Congress, in 1899, "dedicated and set (it) apart as a public park, to be known and designated as Mount Rainier National Park, for the benefit and enjoyment of the people". Mount Rainier National Park became the nation's fourth national park.

The world has changed in many ways since 1899. No longer is Mount Rainier National Park an outpost requiring several days of serious travel to reach. No longer are Park boundaries surrounded by seemingly endless forest. Today's Mount Rainier National Park is an island of wilderness in a sea of clear cuts, visited by more than 2 million people each year.

Concerned about the future of Mount Rainier National Park, a group of Park devotees joined together in 1985 to form Mount Rainier National Park Associates (MRNPA), to preserve and protect the natural state of the Park and to promote wise stewardship of its resources. Today MRNPA continues to work toward those original goals. Acting as a watchdog on activities both inside and outside Park boundaries, and as a loyal supporter and an advocate of protection for the Park, MRNPA is an independent voice, free to praise or criticize, agree or oppose as we see fit.

If you share with us a passion for Mount Rainier National Park, concern about the Park's future, and a vision that Mount Rainier National Park should always be a wild and natural place, we invite you to join MRNPA. As a member you will receive our newsletter, special mailings alerting you to issues impacting the Park, and an invitation to join us with your labor during our three work parties in the Park each year. More importantly, you will be supporting an organization that is working to preserve Mount Rainier National Park's wilderness beauty and splendor "for the benefit and enjoyment of the people" of present and future generations.

To become a member, mail your name, address, and  
\$10 for your first year's dues to:

**Treasurer**  
**Mount Rainier National Park Associates**  
**9230-41st Avenue NE**  
**Seattle, WA 98115-3802**



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Check here if address change ☐

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☐ Adjacent Lands & Boundaries

☐ Newsletter

☐ Wilderness & Backcountry  
Management

☐ Hikes

☐ Visitor Impacts

☐ wilderness

☐ Water

I am interested in attending a board meeting ☐

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