



MRNPA NEWS

Volume 8 Number 1 March 1995

From the Summit

As we know from having it pounded into our heads by nearly every news report since the November elections, control of both Houses of the U.S. Congress has shifted to the Republican Party. I, like most Americans, believe the country will survive this shift and I thought it an inappropriate subject for comment in the MRNPA News until in early January when Representative James Hansen, R-Utah, Chairman of the Public Lands Subcommittee of the House National Resource Committee made what I felt were some absolutely outrageous statements concerning National Parks.

Representative Hansen was quoted as having told a "Wise-Use" group that numerous units in the National Parks system should be sold, given to state or local governments, or turned over to local historical societies. He further advocated that a Park Closure Commission be created to make decisions about closing National Parks because Congressmen and Senators would be unwilling to vote to close National Parks in their states for fear of the wrath of their constituents.

Representative Hansen further complained that National Parks cost too much to operate. A report appearing in a local Seattle newspaper three days later indicated that Doc Hastings, George Nethercutt, and Jack Metcalf, all freshmen Republican Congressmen from Washington, when asked about Representative Hansen's proposals indicated the ideas were good and well worth considering.

Continued on page two

Scoping the MRNP General Plan

by John Titland

During the week of November 14-19 the National Park Service (NPS) held public meetings in Enumclaw, Morton, Eatonville, Tacoma, Seattle, and Yakima to collect ideas from the public about issues that should be included in the General Management Plan (GMP) for Mount Rainier National Park. I attended the meetings in both Enumclaw and Seattle. I was pleased to see the large number of people who attended in Enumclaw and I was surprised and disappointed to see how few people attended the Seattle meeting.

Both meetings began with Superintendent Briggie making introductions and presenting a Vision Statement for Olympic and Mount Rainier National Parks that he and Maureen Finnerty, former Superintendent of Olympic National Park had prepared in 1993. The meetings were then turned over to Allen Haygood, the GMP team leader from the Denver Service Center. Mr. Haygood explained the process that was being followed and how and when each step to be taken. (The schedule is to have the new GMP approved in 1999, and in use for the next 15-20 years). The meeting was then opened up for public comments and input.

The formats for collecting public comments were different at the two meetings but at both the GMP team requested comments from the public on the following subjects:

- 1) Natural Hazards
- 2) Neighboring Communities
- 3) Park Boundary Issues
- 4) Wilderness Resources & Use
- 5) Front Country Resources & Use
- 6) Other.

Rather than have people step up to a microphone and speak individually, people were asked to just speak up. Summaries of the inputs were recorded on flip charts.

As you can imagine, with such an open format and so many subjects being discussed, few people were knowledgeable or prepared to comment on every subject. As you can also imagine, this did not stop people from having opinions or speaking out. While some of the comments were good, my general impression was that the public could have made more meaningful input had people known in ad-

Continued on page three

From the Summit cont'd...

So to comment on the November election, my view is that prior to the election the voters were dissatisfied enough with the 103rd Congress that they decided the election was a fine time to throw the rascals out.

But, as with any election, not all the old rascals got thrown out and a new bunch of rascals got elected. Included in that new bunch of rascals were a herd of "me-too" politicians and a few zealots who seem to feel that by electing them, the voters have endorsed their radical views. Unfortunately, the "me-too" types seem to be letting the zealots, both old and new, control the agenda.

Now that the election is passed and the Republicans have taken charge, what do the voters find is on the agenda? Selling or giving away National Parks! Promoting the "Wise-Use" minority's agenda instead of serving the millions and millions of Americans who visit and enjoy National Parks each year! Recycling the idea that National Parks, but not timber harvest, mining, or grazing on public land, should be run at a profit to the government!

My view is that these are not the issues that voters expected the 104th Congress to have on its agenda. It is also my view that it's time that we, the voters, inform the members of Congress that the American public, not a few zealots,

should be dictating the agenda.

MRNPA exists because we the members all care deeply about and want to protect Mount Rainier National Park. But we can't focus so specifically on Mount Rainier that we ignore Representative Hansen's and the like minded "Wise-Use" crowd's attacks on the National Park system. We must be more than advocates for Mount Rainier National Park. We must be advocates for the concept of National Parks.

How do we do that? My answer is we start at the grassroots. I encourage all MRNPA members to talk to, write, phone, FAX, or somehow communicate with your Congressman and Senators to inform them of your support for Mount Rainier National Park, and all National Parks, and to state your opposition to ideas like those put forward by Representative Hansen.

By responding to Representative Hansen's ideas before he proposes any legislation, we can demonstrate to our representatives in Washington D. C. that real people, constituents, and voters back home support National Parks and feel that dismantling the National Park system is not something that the voters elected the 104th Congress to do.

If enough MRNPA members make their feelings known, we will also send the message (that you might emphasize in your

communication) that should the zealots and the anti-public lands "Wise-Use" crowd be allowed to get their proposals to sell or give away National Parks turned into legislation, there will be strong public reaction against both such legislation and those legislators who support it.

Please contact your Senators and your Representative and express your support for National Parks.

Officers of MRNPA

President John Titland (206) 747-1698
Vice-Pres David Berry (206) 752-3546
Sec'ty John Thompson (206) 829-0377
Treasurer Bob Aegerter (206) 547-4492
Editor — Your Name Here! —
Layout Bob Landen (206) 854-2473

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.

Unless specifically copyrighted, articles and graphics may be reprinted without prior permission if appropriate credit is given.

Scoping cont'd

vance how the meetings were to be conducted and on what subjects the NPS wanted comments.

MRNPA had known for several months prior to these scoping meetings that public input would be requested. We had prepared a list of issues we felt should be addressed in the new GMP. Rather than try to present our list of issues in the public meeting format that the NPS provided, our list was submitted to Superintendent Briggie in letter form. A copy of that letter follows:

November 8, 1994

William J. Briggie Superintendent
Mount Rainier National Park
Tahoma Woods, Star Route
Ashford, WA 98304

Subject: Issues Scoping for General Management Plan

Dear Superintendent Briggie:

Thank you for providing the opportunity for Mount Rainier National Park Associates (MRNPA) to submit our input to a new General Management Plan (GMP) for Mount Rainier National Park.

The following is a list of issues MRNPA has identified that we believe should be addressed, incorporated into, or resolved by the new GMP.

Park Wide Issues

1) "Carrying Capacity"

- Incorporate "Carrying Capacity" as a management tool. The "Carrying Capacity" methodology should be a standards-based approach allowing very little degradation of resources and environment before definite management actions are required. The "Limits of Acceptable Change" methodology currently being used in Mount Rainier National Park is an acceptable base on which to

begin formulating "Carrying Capacity" management.

2) Research Programs

- Institute and continue research programs to establish baseline data on biological communities within the Park (including wildlife, fish, insects, etc.)
- Gather and evaluate social data on day visitor use patterns, needs, and wants.
- Determine the impact of human activities and development on wildlife.
- Identify critical habitat areas both within and on the lands that border the Park.
- Identify biological corridors where either animals or plants move into and out of the Park. Determine the use of these corridors by both native and exotic species.

3) Transportation Planning

- Adopt a transportation plan that
 - a) reduces crowding of private vehicles at Paradise, Sunrise, Ipsut Creek, and Mowich Lake
 - b) includes an evaluation of a bus system.
 - c) eliminates damage to air quality and solitude by motorized vehicles of all kinds.
 - d) controls access to fragile natural areas consistent with limits set by carrying capacity.
 - e) includes no new roads or extensions of existing roads.
- Define a criterion for reopening or final closing of West Side Road.

4) Aircraft Overflights

- Request the FAA create a Restricted Zone over the entire Park.
- Eliminate "official" airborne sightseeing.

5) Boundary Issues

- Develop cooperative management with landowners and agencies controlling lands around the Park perimeter (USFS, etc.) to minimize the detrimental effects on the Park of actions taken on the surrounding lands.
- Enforce Park regulations in boundary areas where people enter the Park from the surrounding lands.
- Maintain signs along Park boundaries.

6) Wildlife

- Determine impact of human activities on wildlife.
- Establish cooperative management strategies with Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife for species that migrate in and out of the Park.
- Establish plans to protect large carnivores (wolves, mountain lions, bears) using the Park as part of their homes ranges.
- Establish procedures for excluding and removing exotic species from the Park and surrounding lands.

7) Plant Life

- Establish methods to decrease the migration of exotic species into the Park.
- Establish procedures for the removal of exotic species already in the Park.

8) Park Expansion

- Evaluate the size of the Park in light of the projected increase in visitor use.
- Investigate expansion of Park boundaries to enlarge botanic communities and wildlife habitats that are of inadequate size within the current boundaries.

Continued on next page

continued from Page 3

9) Fire Management

- Renew and update the fire response and management plan.

10) Interpretation

- Develop interpretative programs that appeal to a variety of visitor expertise. Many Park visitors find the current programs to be too basic or too focused toward children.
- Provide a library of information about the Park that is open to interested individuals seven days a week.

Front-Country Issues

1) Road Maintenance

- Establish standards and maintenance schedules for Carbon River Road, Mowich Road, and West Side Road that will keep these roads safe and usable by Park visitors.
- Evaluate the costs and benefits of road maintenance activities particularly the practice of mowing road shoulders.
- Heal road cut scars, particularly along the Sunrise Road, using methods similar to those that have been used to revegetate eroded meadows.

2) Development

- Allow no additional overnight accommodations or seasonal or permanent residences be built inside the Park.
- Use only existing developed sites to accommodate any increases in visitation.
- Provide facilities for visitors within the developed sites without expanding into undisturbed areas.
- Move residences at White River, Carbon River entrance, and Longmire to locations outside the Park. Upgrade residences

that remain within the Park to minimize any environmental impacts.

3) Sunrise

- Repair and revegetate the closed Sunrise campground.
- Establish a barrier-free pathway from the Sunrise parking lot to the Sunrise campground area to provide opportunities for disabled Park visitors.

4) Lake Tipsoo-Chinook Pass

- Increase and improve visitor contacts and interpretative information.
- Manage the area as a visitor destination.

5) Mowich Lake

- Evaluate closing the campground.
- Evaluate moving all parking areas away from the Lake to avoid automobile caused pollution from entering the Lake.
- Evaluate closing the Mowich Road at some distance from the Lake.

6) Carbon River Entrance--Ipsut Creek

- Provide for year round use of this area including early season road maintenance.

7) Tahoma Woods

- Provide visitor contact and orientation.
- Provide public comfort stations.
- Provide a continuous broadcast radio station to inform travelers of conditions in the Park such as traffic and road conditions, parking and campsite availability, weather alerts, etc.

Back-country Issues

1) Human Sanitation

- Maintain and improve back-country toilet facilities in ways that will encourage greater use.
- Establish procedures to adequately service and maintain the sanitation facilities at Camp Schurman.
- Begin an education program for day visitors and backpackers on proper back-country human sanitation methods.
- Determine if or where inadequate sanitation practices are impacting water quality.

2) High use back-country areas (Spray Park, Summerland, Glacier Basin, etc.)

- Use the results of the social studies on visitor activities when determining revegetation plans. Provide areas for sitting, picnicking, and viewing scenery and wildlife.
- Upgrade some informal trails in the high use areas to encourage visitors to move on into lower use areas and to discourage the creation of social trails.

3) Trail Maintenance

- Develop trail maintenance standards which avoid the excessive use of engineered structures (waterbar staircases, decorative rockwork, etc.) in favor of more natural trail constructions.
- Require that unused construction materials be removed from the back-country upon completion of the maintenance projects. Currently unused materials are either left in storage areas or scattered, becoming eyesores that have no contextual relationship to their surroundings.

4) Back-Country Structures and Artifacts

- Maintain historic structures and buildings on a regular schedule

Continued on next page

continued from Page 4

or remove them from the back-country.

- Give historic structures a reasonable level of respect and provide some interpretative information for the visitor. For example, remove the building numbers prominently displayed over the doors on the shelter at Indian Bar and the lookout at Shriners Peak.
- Determine historic value of human artifacts remaining in the back-country, for example, mining artifacts along Glacier Basin Trail.

- Remove all non-historic artifacts and garbage, (rusting barrels, abandoned cable and wire, etc.) from the back-country.

5) Back-country and Climbers Reservation System

- Provide telephone or modem access to the system so users can determine area status before they arrive at the Park.
- Improve accuracy of the information in the system. Periodically check actual use against reservations.
- Provide 24 hours a day access to reservations. Park visitors should not need to wait for NPS

personnel to come to work to get permits.

Mount Rainier National Park Associates are very interested in continued participation in the GMP planning process. Please keep us informed of upcoming events and on the mailing list for copies of documents concerning the GMP.

Very truly yours,

John A. Titland
President

Mount Rainier National Park
Associates

Attend A MRNPA Board Meeting!

The next meeting is

at 7:00 P.M. on March 6, 1995

in the large meeting room

at the Kent Public Library, located at

212 2nd Ave N in Kent, Washington.

**Ms. Sylvia Cleaver of the Mt. Rainier Resort at Park Junction
will present the plans for the Resort development
and discuss impacts on the Park.**