

Mount Rainier National Park Associates Newsletter



Vol. 3, No. 2

"a non-profit citizens awareness organization for the Park"

Spring 1987



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NPS POLICY CONFLICTS FLARE

National Parks and Conservation Association recently advised its members of what appears to be an all-out attack on present Park Service management policy. This attack is originating from the office of the Assistant Secretary of Interior William P. Horn. Apparently he is attempting to make good a promise of former Secretary James Watt to significantly alter management of our national parks. Of particular importance is the attempt to rewrite the Management Policies Manual to reinterpret the NPS mission to state that parks are "primarily" for visitor enjoyment. Budget priorities and resource threat assessments would then be judged on how they would affect "visitor experience." Resource protection, based on its own merit, would no longer be valid.

Already, the Secretary's office has said it wishes to relax policies designed for resource protection such as ORV use and chemical pesticides. NPS has been told that wildlife in certain areas does not deserve the priority it has had, and emphasis should be on heavy (See "Conflicts Flare" p. 2)

FROM THE SUMMIT.....

May 19th will be MRNPA's third Annual Meeting, at which time election of Board of Trustees members and officers will occur. This core group will be facing a multitude of issues in the upcoming year; the experience of returning Board members and the enthusiasm of new members will be called upon to research the issues, formulate plans and take action.

Your Board will be interacting with a new Regional Director for the National Park Service's (NPS) Pacific Northwest office. Charles H. Odegaard has been transferred from Omaha, Nebraska, where he was Midwest Regional Director; prior to that position, Odegaard served as Deputy Regional Director here in Seattle, and, from 1963-1979 he was Director of the Washington Parks and Recreation Commission. Odegaard's appointment is one example of the policy conflict between NPS Director, William Penn Mott, who had chosen William Briggie for the position, and William P. Horn, Assistant Interior Secretary, who selected Odegaard. The conflict between Mott and Horn appears to represent the Reagan Administration's effort to gain political control over the NPS. With the help of Washington, D.C.-based conservation groups, such as National Parks and Conservation Association, MRNPA trustees will keep a close watch on the reorganization of the Park Service.

Chuck Odegaard is a strong proponent of the "parks are for people" philosophy. While this philosophy is of noble enough intent, of equal importance (and to some environmentalists, of greater importance), is the mandate of resource (See "Summit" p. 2)

("Conflicts Flare" p. 1)

recreation. The term "impairment" of park resources would be redefined to mean a lessening of visitor enjoyment. Present problems such as exotic vegetation, air pollution on tree growth, and loss of mammals, would become much lower on the priority list of problems. The NPS has been ordered to rewrite one chapter per month in the Management Policies Manual.

On another Administration front, the Park Service budget is being hit for large cuts in FY 1988. \$16 million is proposed for land acquisition (conservationists have proposed \$169 million), and \$31 million has been proposed for construction projects (conservationists have proposed twice as much). The Administration wants to raise \$52 million through fees in parks. But the fees would probably prove too high for many visitors. And what money is raised would only be used to offset previously allocated general fund revenues. In addition, the Administration proposes to rescind \$65 million in already approved land acquisition funds, and \$59 million in construction funds already approved. Proposals such as these have frequently been unsuccessful in the past, but the attacks on the Park System continue unabated.

If these problems are not enough, NPCA says that several key transfers within NPS are very controversial. Dick Briceland, NPS Associate for Natural Resources, and a strong proponent of clean air, has been chosen to be replaced by Eugene Heater, currently a Deputy Director of U.S. Fish and Wildlife. NPS has tried to force the resignation of Howard Chapman, Western Regional Director, who has defied the Assistant Secretary on several matters, and now faces "poor" performance evaluations until he names a retirement date. Stan Allright, Associate Director for Operations, is scheduled to transfer to the Western Region until Howard Chapman leaves. And William Penn Mott's choice of William Briggles to become new Pacific Northwest Regional Director was vetoed in favor of Charles Odgaard. Mott fired off a five-page memo to Horn in which he protested vigorously the reorganization plan as, "not strengthening park programs."



A SPECIAL CAUSE!

Each month there is a big handful of letters from environmental organizations seeking contributions for their cause. I am thankful that there are so many. I'm thankful for the WILDERNESS SOCIETY, founded by Aldo Leopold, and Bob Marshall, to help the foresters who could not see the forest because of the trees. I appreciate John Muir and the SIERRA CLUB for bringing high-country wilderness and its preservation to a national audience. I commend the NATURE CONSERVANCY for its work

to save wild places, and the AUDUBON SOCIETY because of their concern for birds and bird habitat.

Here in the Northwest we have a unique wild place; an island filled with unique birds, animals and plants that is worthy of our concern for its protection: MOUNT RAINIER NATIONAL PARK.

Would you please join with me today in making a tax-free donation of twenty-five dollars or more to the work of Mount Rainier National Park Associates? MRNPA needs your contribution for programs:

- * To study needed boundary enlargements
- * To review management proposals with adverse impact on the Park.
- * To convince policy writers of the need to preserve wilderness in Park and adjoining forest planning areas.

Your tax-exempt contribution will be very much appreciated.

—Bob Aegerter

("Summit" p. 1)

preservation. The National Park Service Organic Act of 1916 clearly created the NPS to manage parks "in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations." This balance between recreation and conservation, tourism and preservation, is at the heart of many problems surrounding management at Mount Rainier National Park. In the coming year we will likely see increased promotion of tourism in the Park, especially aimed toward foreign visitors, yet carrying capacity studies are weak and visitor impact management seems of low priority. The Park Service needs to aggressively introduce the public to the concept of limiting the number of visitors in such a way that people will accept the need for advance reservations or parking restrictions, et cetera. One visit to Paradise on a sunny August Sunday will quickly convince anyone that visitors are making a grossly adverse impact on the Mountain.

A recent article in the Seattle Post Intelligencer underscores how poor resource management has irreparably damaged wildlife in the national parks. The article summarized the findings of William Newmark, who studied the disappearance of mammalian species from the parks. At Mount Rainier alone, about one-third of the large mammals that once inhabited the area have disappeared, including wolverines, timber wolves, river otters and Canadian lynx. As more and more development adjacent to park boundaries occurs, seasonal range lands and breeding (See "Summit" p. 3)

("Summit" p. 2)

grounds for many species are destroyed. The Park has clearly become an island, surrounded by logging clear-cuts, commercial and residential property, and other forms of development. To attempt re-establishment of species within the Park, ecosystem management must occur, involving boundary changes, preservation of land adjacent to the Park, and intensified monitoring of remaining animals within the Park. Wildlife preservation will require close cooperation between the Park Service and the U.S. Forest Service, which manages so much of the land adjacent to MRNP; unfortunately, there is little precedent for effective cooperation between these two groups - at least on these issues.

Boundary studies are one area of special interest to MRNPA's Board this spring, and our active Wildlife Subcommittee will be watchdogging the work of the Park's resource management specialists. We will continue to encourage the Park to examine carrying capacity and visitor impact issues; if tourism is to be encouraged by the NPS, then major changes must occur throughout the Park to minimize the effect of increased numbers of visitors. All in all, MRNPA's new Board will have a busy agenda this spring and summer.

—Sue Stann, President

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ANNUAL MEETING SET

Please plan to attend the important Annual Meeting of MRNPA scheduled for May 19th. We will elect a new slate of officers for new terms, and guest speaker Ola Edwards, an alpine ecologist, will address the membership. Refer to the inclosed flyer for exact time. Meeting will be held at Anthony's Home Port Restaurant in Des Moines.



THE PIERCE COUNTY FOOTHILLS TRAIL

Burlington Northern Railroad has abandoned a 21-mile section of track between McMillin and Wilkeson in Eastern Pierce County. Wilkeson is on State Route 165 near the Carbon River entrance to Mount Rainier National Park. Pierce County plans to build a paved bicycle-and-horse trail on the old railroad bed.

Support for this project has come from numerous outdoor and conservation organizations, including Mount Rainier National Park Associates.

As proposed, the trail would be maintained for hikers, walkers, bicyclists and horse riders with no motorized vehicle use allowed. The most attractive features of this trail system include: 1) The first leg of an eventual Puget Sound to Mount Rainier Trail as well as a link to Mt. Peak (Pete) Preserve, Northwest Trek, Nolte and Palmer-Kanasket State Parks and King County's Inter-urban Trail. 2) Creation of a safe recreational easement away from busy highways. 3) Preservation of an historic resource originally built for transporting coal from mines in the Carbonado-Wilkeson area. 4) Establishment of public access to rivers and streams near the trail.

Property owners along the right-of-way are organized in opposition to the trail project. They fear noise, trespassing, littering, vandalism and other assorted problems. Other nearby residents are in favor of the trail, looking forward to the economic and recreational benefits it will bring to their communities.

In Seattle, the Burke-Gilman Trail has brought benefits to the community. The early fears of nearby residents have proven groundless. Since construction of the trail eight years ago, crime in the adjacent community has decreased while property values have risen. Most residents now agree that the trail has improved their quality of life.

Pierce County Parks is now expanding on their original draft proposal and will soon be presenting their final plan to the local communities. Acquisition of right-of-way from Burlington Northern and other parcels from private land owners will begin shortly thereafter.

For more information call Jeff Goulden at (206) 863-3265.

NEW NPS REGIONAL DIRECTOR APPOINTED

Charles H. Odegaard has been appointed as the new Pacific Northwest Regional Director, replacing William Briggie, the interim Director. Odegaard has a 35-year service background in parks and recreation both in the public and private sector. He has served on the faculty at the University of Washington and Oregon State University. He co-authored a '83 textbook (See "New Director" p. 4)

("New Director" p. 3)
titled "Park Management." He is native to Beloit, Wisconsin, and received his B.S. degree from Wisconsin State College at LaCrosse. Graduate work was done at the University of Washington, Wisconsin, and Nebraska at Omaha. He is a WW II veteran, President elect of the American Academy for Park and Recreation Administration, President of American Youth Hostels, and a member of Omaha's Downtown Rotary. He plans to live in Seattle. His wife's name is Evelyn.

Odegaard is no stranger to controversy. He was fired as Washington State Parks Director in 1979. The commission claimed it had lost confidence in him. Gov. Dixie Lee Ray spent two years trying to fire him over a 1977 audit which showed his department had overspent its 1975 budget by \$168,000.

In a NPS departmental fight between Assistant Secretary of the Interior William P. Horn and NPS Director William Penn Mott, Odegaard was selected to replace William Briggie, the favorite candidate for the regional position. It is probable that this fight was an attempt to transfer park service control from career employees to Reagan political appointees. Reagan administrators have announced their intent to close the 125-person Seattle regional office, and this move was only blocked by Rep. Norm Dicks, who prevented monies from being allocated for such a move.

A spokesman for Dicks, George Behan, believes that Briggie was not selected for the position because he testified against the proposed closure. Behan believes this made him a "marked man." Although Assistant Secretary Horn used the excuse that Briggie was not a member of the "senior executive service," a career employee status which promotes transfers of highly qualified candidates between agencies, Behan called the excuse ridiculous.



EXTINCTION OF MT. RAINIER MAMMALS POSSIBLE

In a March 20th article in the Post-Intelligencer, Jane Hadley reported on a recent doctoral dissertation done by a University of Michigan student. The article also was published in the British scientific journal Nature, and caused many phone calls to the NPS and alarmed many environmentalists. The following summarizes some of the key points made in Hadley's article.

Mt. Rainier Park was established in 1899. By 1933, the wolverines and striped skunks had disappeared. By 1935 the fisher could not be found, and by 1947 the timber wolf had disappeared. By 1951 there were no river otter, and the Canada lynx was not seen after 1955. Spotted skunks were gone by 1963. In fact, Mt. Rainier has lost about one-third of its mammals since the park has been established, according to William Newmark who conducted the study. According to Newmark, Mt. Rainier is expected to lose fully 60% of its small meat eaters, and 80% of its large meat eaters in the next 100-200 years, if

only minimal wildlife management occurs. The remaining wildlife at Mt. Rainier Park includes: Pika, snowshoe rabbit, coyote, red fox, black bear, racoon, marten, ermine, long-tailed weasel, mink, mountain lion, bobcat, mule deer, and mountain goat. Elk, which disappeared before the Park was established, were re-introduced in 1934, and continue to thrive.

Richard Briceland, science advisor to the Director of the Park Service, blames activity occurring outside the boundaries of the parks. The problem is that the national parks have become islands in a sea of development. They are too small to support all the species which lived there prior to human encroachment.

Newmark suggests three strategies:

- * Enlarge the parks.
- * Enter into agreements with adjacent landowners to preserve habitats around the parks.
- * Allow some natural fires to burn uncontrolled in certain wilderness areas, which would provide increased forage for certain species.

However, according to Newmark, the NPS has a weak and ineffective scientific program. Species are not monitored regularly. Cooperative management of adjacent lands for protection of the park wildlife is not working, and may actually encourage habitat elimination—as in the case of Forest Service logging. The spotted owl may be the first species to go, since logging will have a dramatic affect on this species. The owl needs low-elevation old-growth, now found mostly on adjacent Forest Service lands. The cooperation which has occurred recently between the Forest Service and the Park Service was only done to prove that spotted owls did not need as much land, since some are in the national parks. The Forest Service draft plan for protecting spotted owls has been roundly criticized for presenting "best case" scenarios for owl survival. Yet, all but one of the 12 alternatives presented would result in the extinction of the spotted owl. The owl would even become extinct under the Forest Service preferred alternative.

Ted Sudia, Park Service senior scientist, is dismayed that the National Park Service stopped inventories of animals some 20 years ago. He says the NPS should have been the ones to discover what Newmark has stated in his report. Yet, only 1% of the total NPS budget goes for research. The NPS is seen by political appointees in the Interior Department as a luxury, while the Forest Service is viewed as an economic necessity.

Other problems include park boundaries, which were not originally drawn up to protect wildlife or resources. Some animals require large territories.

Stan Schlegel, Resource Management Specialist at Mt. Rainier National Park, disputes some of what Newmark contends. He says that skunks thrive on civilization, and does not feel river otters have



("Extinction" p. 4)

never had optimum habitat in the Park. Yet he agrees with Newmark that animals in small parks are vulnerable.

Although none of the species reported by Newmark as lost in Mt. Rainier is reported extinct worldwide, his report is seen as a warning sign that these animals are on the decline everywhere.

The above synopsis should serve warning to all MRNPA members that Mount Rainier National Park is in a great deal of trouble. Members should get involved to the fullest extent in issues which will promote the protection and preservation of Park resources, and be vigilant for threats. It is critical that interested citizens express their views on protecting their parks through letters to park officials and other pertinent agencies.

THANK YOU, ROGER....

With the mailing of this Spring newsletter, our editor, Roger Garrett, has passed on his most important function as newsletter co-ordination to a team of six who will assume responsibility in May.

Since the organization's inception in January of 1985, Roger has individually edited and typed all articles, as well as performed the "lay-out" for the quarterly newsletter. And that is a LOT OF WORK every three months for one person.

The Mount Rainier National Park Associates would like to express their deepest gratitude and appreciation to Roger for his outstanding work. Informing our members of current activities, future plans, and management concerns is a top priority of our organization. You need to know how your dues and support are being utilized. And Roger performed superbly in doing that.

Needless to say, our newsletter could not be published without those members who submitted the articles. I want to personally thank MARY FRIES for sharing her expertise in the plant life of MRNP, EDITH GOODMAN for sharing her knowledge of history of MRNP, MARY HOUSTON for her varied articles in our newsletter and the Enumclaw newspaper supporting our efforts. Other contributors over the past two years have been: ART KIEHN, JOHN & YOLANDA THOMPSON, LARRY CARREAU, JIM BAKER, BOB AEGERTER, SUE STANN, JEFF GOULDEN, JON SOEST, VAN PERDUE, and ARLENE CONDE.

I hope you will continue to share your knowledge and concerns in our newsletter during the coming year. We really do appreciate what you have to offer — you give substance to our newsletter.

Since it was impossible to find a lone replacement for Roger, our next best alternative was to organize a "team" of people who share the work load. Thank-you to those who have offered to be part of that team: ELLEN OSTERN, VAN PERDUE, PAT SMITH, JEFF GOULDEN, MARGIE GOULDEN, & SALLY SOEST.

We are still recruiting help for the actual production of the newsletter, as well as seeking more contributors

to submit articles. If you're interested in either area, please contact: Margie Goulden
4710 129th Avenue E.
Sumner, WA 98390 (863-3265)

THANK-YOU again Roger for your belief and commitment to the MRNPA. You are relinquishing the editorship of the newsletter only to assume a more active role in other areas of concern. Right? Your dedication is really valued!!!

—Margie Goulden

HELP INCREASE OUR NUMBERS.....

Our green membership flyer is again enclosed with this newsletter mailing. Yes, we are continually making an effort to attract new members. And you, our present members, are our best spokes-people. If you believe in the philosophy and goals of MRNPA, you can share that belief with your friends, at the workplace, and at meetings by posting the flyer or passing it on, so that others can learn of our group's endeavors.

For your information, the enclosed flyer has also been mailed to the Tatoosh Sierra Club members, the Tahoma Audubon members, and the Tacoma Mountaineer members. Our membership has increased a little as a result of those mailings. But, again, we, the present members, are our best advocates. So please ... pass on the green flyer to a friend or acquaintance. And if you haven't renewed your own membership, please fill in the white membership form and mail it with your check.

A big THANK-YOU to those who have already renewed and to those who have been able to offer a donation. As in any organization, we do need your money to operate. But more importantly, we need and value your trust and confidence in those of us who are making the major decisions for Mount Rainier National Park Associates. By renewing your memberships and by sharing our concerns and efforts with others, you are giving us the support to forge ahead into our third year of working for the preservation of Mount Rainier National Park. Thank-you a hundred-fold for that trust. With everyone's help WE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE.

—Margie Goulden
Past President

FAREWELL TO JIM BAKER

The Mount Rainier National Parks Associates were indeed fortunate the last two years to benefit from the expertise of JIM BAKER, a full-time environmentalist. In February, Jim assumed a six-month paid position in Utah as a fund-raiser. Farewell Jim. Hurry Back! We wish you every success in your new position.

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APPLY TO THE FOLLOWING YEAR.

PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM WITH CHECK
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