Volume 6 Number 2 SPRING 1990

MRNPA NEWS

NEWSLETTER OF THE MOUNT RAINIER NATIONAL PARK ASSOCIATES

FROM THE SUMMIT. . .

While we greet the recent recommendations to reduce logging of Forest Service lands to preserve the habitat of the spotted owl, we do not leave behind us the need to be vigilant about the areas still to be logged. The northern boundary of the Park is still under threat of being logged. MRNPA considers this to be one of the major issues we face. Ultimately we would like to see the remaining uncut parcels between the Park and the Clearwater Wilderness remain uncut. We continue to work towards expanding the Park boundaries and will continue to need your help to bring these issues to the attention of your friends and legislators.

Another issue we continue to face is minimizing the impact of visitors to the Park. During the months of July and August monthly visitation exceeds 800,000 persons. Getting people in and out of the Park without huge lines of cars, full parking lots and the noise and fumes from these cars will be a major challenge we are undertaking during the coming year.

A major undetaking for MRNPA is the annual work party on which we volunteer our time to help reconstruct trails. The increase of visitors to the Park during the last few years continues to have an enormous impact on the trail systems. Work on the trails is one of those tasks we can help perform which has an immediate impact on the Park. You do not need special skills and no one works harder or longer than they feel they can handle.

In whatever capacity you feel you can help, please let us know. If one of the above areas is of interest to you, or you have another area of concern, please call or write me. We are always interested in new ideas and in sharing our hopes and dreams for the Park. Remember, our annual meeting is being held on May 22nd, 1990. I look forward to seeing you there.

Pat Smith

"At the time of your death, my head will burst open. The water from the lake here will flow down my sides into the valley below. I, Takobed, have spoken.

The old man died, and it was as he said. Takobed's head burst open, and the lake on top spilled out, and the water rushed down. It swept the trees from where Orting now is, and left the prairie covered with stones.

[This Puyallup Indian legend, as retold by author Ella E. Clark, is a dramatic representation of a Mount Rainier mudflow.]

ANNUAL MEETING

Date: Tuesday, May 22, 1990
Time: 7:30 p.m.
Place: Mountaineers Clubhouse-Prusik Room
300 Third Avenue West
Seattle
Speaker: Carolyn L. Driedger
Sponsor: The Mountaineers Conservation Division
PLEASE JOIN US FOR AN ENJOYABLE EVENING

It has been said that the only thing constant in nature is change. If this is so, then our own Mount Rainier is a multifaceted monument of change--tediously erected and then torn down by the powerful forces that shape our fragile planet.

Carolyn L. Driedger, a U.S.G.S. glaciologist based in Tacoma, has witnessed the events connected to processes that lead to change--as a matter of fact, Driedger will be the guest speaker at our May 22 meeting, to be held at the Mountaineers Clubhouse in Seattle. As MRNPA moves through Earth Year 1990, Driegder will tell us how the 25 glaciers move on Mount Rainier. She has conducted extensive field work on the "living rivers of ice" in the Western U.S. and Alaska since 1978. Her current study involves the glacial outburst floods on the west side of Mount Rainier. Says Driedger, "Mount Rainier National Park was established to conserve not an extinct volcano, but one that is dormant and ever-changing". Please come and join us.

BOUNDARY CONCERNS

There have been allegations made about Forest Service road building which suggest that in the late '70s and early '80s long entries were made into roadless areas that would preclude those areas from Wilderness designation at a later date. Roads into the Chenuis drainage and Pigeon Creek are examples that may have been treated in this way. With those areas unprotected, logging plans are being made that jeopardized the northern boundary to Mt. Rainier National Park and the Clearwater Wilderness.

The old forests of the Clearwater were designated wilderness in a fragmented manner to avoid already present roads. That narrow neck of one mile comprising Independence Ridge was to be the wildlife seasonal migration corridor in and out of the Park. Current planned cuts will more clearly define the narrowness of that corridor; that it will be better used by the wildlife when more clearly identified is questionable.

A small group of people, the Carbon Valley Committee, led by Scott Nicolai of Wilkeson, has discussed planned cuts with the Forest Service and with some effect, apparently. A letter from Ted Lewis, District Ranger, dated March 28, states that instead of proceeding with the cuts as planned in the Chenuis Drainage, a full environmental impact statement will be made. The official notice to begin the preparation of the statement will be released in June. That is a rare and welcome move. People can effect change, but to avert destruction of the precious little that is left, effort is necessary.

So, <u>temporarily</u> the cutting in Chenuis Drainage has been forestalled (note <u>temporarily</u>). That, though, puts pressure on the Forest Service to find its required harvest elsewhere. Other than the small one-mile neck of the Clearwater Wilderness that adjoins the Park, the northern boundary may soon look as bare as the western boundary--clearcut to the line! We must not back away from the challenge of protecting the Park, the Wilderness, wildlife, and the water. Though spotted owls are thought to be found along the boundary, we must not rely on them alone for its protection. Other species are also threatened when not protected by park or wilderness designation.

You are urged to be aware of plans; object to them if they do not protect and conserve. It is much easier today to stand up for the environment than it used to---and it is certainly more necessary to do so. Go spot an owl; you may help save a forest!

John Thompson

EDITH

Edith Goodman, a long time member of many outdoor and conservation organizations, passed away in February of 1990 after a short bout with illness. Known to most as 'Edie', she was an avid hiker, trail builder, and environmentalist. Edie was one of the first members of MRNPA. We'll remember her most for her contributions to the newsletter--she wrote many articles sharing the history of Mount Rainier National Park.

Besides writing about the Park, Edie also helped to maintain the Park's trail system by volunteering each year for our annual Trail Work Party. Several years her junior, I had the privilege of working beside her when reconstructing the trails of the Park. Edie was a hard worker, seemed to know what to do, and LOVED what she did. She especially loved the Park with its many anmial habitats and its unique plant life. Edie cared about life and all living things. She cared about the future of Mt. Rainier National Park, and she cared about the people who used the Park too.

Since Edie cannot be with us this summer at our annual work party and potluck dinner, perhaps more of us could sign up in her place and continue doing the work she loved to do. Edie will be with us in spirit. If you didn't meet her in person, join us this summer, and get to know a little more about her. Her enthusiastic and caring personality just might rub off!

Margie Goulden

Mount Rainier National Park Information

(206) 569-2211

I REMEMBER EDITH

A breeze rushed past the Cascara tree--
Healing--helping--caring.
Upon yonder ridge--she walked with me--
Careful to warn me of my bearing.

Wapowety Cleaver--Camp Hazard--
She's still climbing, yet higher...
But this time on a different plain.

And I can only guess what she is wearin
A backpack with brown-bag lunch--
A smile with no more pain.

Larry Carreau

GROVE OF THE PATRIARCHS

The tremendous trees are bound to impress children--and grandparents too--with their size, age, and venerable beauty. There are interpretive signs for parents, hollow trees for imaginative children to crawl inside, and a shallow creek for everyone to soak or splash in. A great spot to cool off on a hot day, and a big wide trail to hike on a rainy one.

Drive Highway 12 south through Packwood and continue about 8 miles toward White Pass. Go left at the junction with Highway 123, signed "Mount Rainier National Park." Enter the Park and drive past the campground to a major junction; go left on the Stevens Canyon road signed "Paradise." Pass the entrance station and park on the far side of the Ohanepecosh River bridge. The trail starts beside the restroom.

The trail is mostly level. Look for the "squirrel overpass," a log suspended 10 feet over the trail like a freeway overpass. At a trail junction turn right and descend a short switchback to a suspension bridge that spans a shallow branch of the river to a loop trail. Go either way, winding through the Grove of the Patriarchs. There are 35 trees over 25 feet in diameter, some over 300 feet high, and all estimated to be between 800 to 1000 years old. Notice that

TRAVEL FOR FEBRUARY

FEB'90	FEB' 89	1990 TO DATE	1989 TO DATE	PERCENT
Visitors				
18,380	34,320	83,969	94,039	-10.7% yr
Hotel Guests				
0*	244	0	563	-
Auto Campers				
145	257	624	397	+57% yr
Backcountry Camper Nights				
348	97	827	215	+284% yr

*Longmire Inn closed due to renovation project

PARK INFORMATION;
Call (206) 569-2211, 7:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m., Monday through Thursday, and 7:30 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Friday through Sunday.

some of the hemlocks are standing in midair on giant forklike roots. These trees were germinated and grown on nurse logs that long ago decayed and disappeared. Tell the children they provide homes for the seven dwarfs and other friendly woodland creatures.

From Best Hikes with Children in Western Washington and the Cascades. By Joan Burton. Published by The Mountainners.

V.I.P. CERTIFICATE

In Earth Year 1990, MRNPA has received a Volunteers in Parks (V.I.P.) certificate, endorsed by N.P.S. Director James M. Ridenour and M.R.N.P. Superintendent Neal G. Guse. "In appreciation and recognition", the certificate commemorates MRNPA's stewardhip role in the National Park system, and recognizes the "people behind the shovel" in the first five years of MRNPA's existence.

As an MRNPA member since its innception in 1985 (one year after my first successful climb of Rainier), I've realized there's much more to the Pacific Northwest than its mountains; namely its people. MRNPA is a unique pinpoint of light within a vast constellation of conservation-oriented groups of people--all unselfishly giving their time and resources to make this a better planet on which to live.

I have recently accepted a job opportunity in America's newest national park, Great Basin National Park in eastern Nevada. This will be my second seasonal assignment for the National Park Service, and I'm very anxious to take on the challenge. But don't think for one moment that MRNPA's "trail shovel" won't continue to swing! I trust that Past President Bob Aegeter will maintain MRNPA's unique "trail's on" stewardship role within the Park.

I would like to take this time to remember the late Stan Dittmar and the late Edith Goodman, two people who devoted their entire lives to volunteer stewardship in the Pacific Northwest. They will be missed.

Larry Carreau

RENEW MEMBERSHIP TODAY

BEFORE YOU BUILD, THINK ABOUT THIS...

A most basic issue in trail management is concern for vegetation, most particularly native plants--for essentially what a trail is is removed vegetation, and where most trails are located is in parks and open space preserves of particularly beautiful landscapes. The admirable goal of trail building generally is to make nature experiences available to the citizens.

But the act of trail building and usage brings up several concerns. What plants get removed? Do you cut through a sensitive wetland valuable for exchange of nutrients? Or alter a drainage so that you kill off downslope plants dependent on the water, or flood other areas with the same effect? Do you cut through a serpentine outcrop with its usual assemblage of unusual plants? Are there are any rare-listed plants in the proposed route? Unless you do a year-in-advance study how do you know what sensitive annuals may have come and gone in your proposed site?

How wide a swath do you cut? Do you aim for a trail just wide enough to accommodate a hiker--and to maintain the feeling of closeness to nature for him? Or do you feel that you must also accommodate two-way traffic of not just hikers but also mountain bikes and horses as well? And to do that with any chance of avoiding violent encounters, physically and verbally--let alone legally--you must cut a swath of boulevard-sized proportions? If you must accommodate all those groups--and perhaps wheelchairs as well--do you designate certain portions of trail routes for only one type of user?--or only on certain days? How do they get back to their starting point? Or do you cut parallel trails for the several types--and return to a divided boulevard concept? If you allow horses on a trail, how do you control grazing along and off the trail?

What are the possible adverse effects on the landscape of the way the trail is built? Will the cuts you make across a slope and through natural drainage pathways cause erosion and slides? Will the wheels of the machinery you use and the boots of the workers and users bring in or transfer undesirable exotic plants along the trail? Will you then use defoliants or weed killers of questionable toxicity to the native plants in the area--and humans and wildlife as well?

In summary, trails by definition open up an ecosystem. Soil is exposed, eroded, and compacted. The substrate is changed, resulting in changing the surrounding plant community in many ways. Small creatures dependent on the plant cover can have their lives disastrously interrupted. But impacts on the plants can be minimized by such measures as sensitive routing, controlling erosion, and vigilant weed control. Therefore, let ust strive for well-built and well-maintained trails with minimum impact on our environment.

From California Native Plant Society newsletter, Vol.16 No.2

TRAIL PARTY

Trail work parties are an important way we show our support for the Park. They are also fun! No one works too hard, and with training and equipment from the Park Service, a great deal gets accomplished. Come join us at Chenuis Falls trail on the Carbon River Road Saturday, May 19th. For more information contact Bob Aegerter, 9230 41st Ave. N.E. Seattle, WA 98115-3802. Telephone (206) 527-4492.

WATER QUALITY IN SELECTED LAKES OF MOUNT RAINIER NATIONAL PARK

The acidification of lakes by acidic precipation is well documented in the northeastern U.S., southeastern Canada, Scandinavia, and parts of western Europe. Recent work suggests that other areas may be affected to various degrees. One of these is the Cascade range, where many pristine, high-altitude lakes are located. Precipitation on these lake basins carries pollutants that largely originate from the Willamette-Puget Sound Trough. This precipitation has been shown to be acidic in some cases, as have some of the lakes.

The National Park Service is concerned about the potential acidification of lakes in Mount Rainier National Park. Like many other lakes in the Cascades, these lakes were thought to be susceptible to the effects of acidic precipitation because most are located in basins of weathering-resistant bedrock and thin soil cover. As a result, their waters are usually dilute with little buffering capacity (resistance to pH changes). The Park lakes are also in areas of heavy precipitation and as such their chemical composition is dependent upon the composition of the precipitation as well as the basin geology.

Thirteen lakes in the were evaluated for general chemical characteristics, sensitivity to acidification by acidic precipitation, and degree of existing acidification. They were found to be pristine for the most part. The lakes studied were Allen, one of the Chenuis group, Crescent, Crystal, Eleanor, Fan, one of the Golden group, Marsh, Mowich, Mystic, Shriner, and two unnamed lakes. The lakes were sampled in August 1983.

The pH values for all of the lakes ranged from 5.8 to 6.5. In most of the lakes vertical profiles of temperature, dissolved oxygen, pH, and specific conductance were relatively uniform. In the deeper lakes, temperature decreased with depth and dissolved-oxygen concentrations increased to about 20 feet, remained constant to 80 feet, then decreased with increasing depth. Exceptions to general water quality patterns were observed in three lakes. Allen Lake had a specific conductance value of 58 uS/cm and an alkalinity concentration of 27 mg/L. The lake of the Golden group was anaerobic at the bottom and had relatively high concentrations of dissolved organic carbon and relatively low levels of light transmission.

Comparison of lake data to acid-sensitivity thresholds for specific conductance and alkalinity indicated that all of the lakes except Allen would be sensitive to acid precipitation. The small sizes of the lakes, and their locations in basins of high precipitation and weathering-resistant rock types enhance their sensitivity. None of the lakes in this study appeared to be presently acidified. pH values were above the levels generally accepted as indicative of acidification (pH

= 5.5), and nitrate, sulfate and metals concentrations were low. Plots based on pH and calcium (which represented "original" alkalinity) suggested that most of the lakes are not being acidified.

These sensitive lakes could remain unacidified only in the absence of acid precipitation, suggesting that Mount Rainier National Park presently receives little or no acid precipitation. This may be the case, since there are no major sources of acid rain directly upwind of the Park. However, this study represents only a small percentage of lakes in the Park, at only one time of the year. Meteorological conditions near the Park can vary considerably throughout the year. New sources of acidic precipitation could be added to the atmosphere upwind of the Park at any time. Given their sensitivity, such changes could affect the rate and degree of acidification of lakes in the Park in a relatively short time.

FAY FULLER, THE FIRST WOMAN TO CLIMB MOUNT RAINIER

FAY PAID HER DUES.

HAVE YOU PAID YOURS?

RENEW MEMBERSHIP TODAY

MOUNT RAINIER NATIONAL PARK ASSOCIATES
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