



MRNPA NEWS

Volume 8 Number 1 Spring 1994

From The Summit

by John Titland

The MRNPA bylaws state various objectives of our organization, including to advocate and preserve the natural state of the Park, to protect its flora and fauna, to promote wise stewardship of Park resources. In practical terms what do we think all these objectives mean? When I am asked about MRNPA, I say we are advocates and we are watchdogs. Being an advocate for the Park can be done at home, at work, in town or wherever. Being a watchdog can't. Looking at the Mountain from Seattle or Tacoma doesn't qualify as "watch-dogging". Neither does reading about Park policies and events in the local papers or in our newsletter. Watch-dogging means going to the Park and watching.

Last year about this time, when I was asked to become President of MRNPA, I decided that to be an effective president, a knowledgeable advocate, and a real watchdog, I needed to spend more time at the Park, to become familiar with more places at the Park, and to see the Park in all seasons. Acting on this decision resulted in the fullest and most enjoyable year of visiting and hiking around Mt. Rainier that my wife Jane and I have ever spent. From an icy day in February at Chenuis Falls to a glorious fall day at Sunrise in October, we spent 18 days exploring, wandering, sightseeing, and enjoying Mt. Rainier National Park. We also did our share of watch-dogging.

Watch-dogging a place as large as Mt. Rainier National Park is a big job. I don't think for even a minute that an organization like MRNPA can, or even should, get into a position of second guessing the National Park Service on running an operation as large as a National Park.

My experience in dealing with the Park Service is that it is made up of a group of devoted people who care about the Park as much as we do. But that doesn't mean we should not challenge the NPS to think about why and how things get done and how to do things better. Unfortunately, even the most devoted people get caught up in institutionalized thinking. Part of our job as watchdogs is to point out to

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Are There Condominiums in Crystal's Future?

by Bob Aegerter

Crystal Mountain Ski Area is the one downhill ski resort in Washington that attracts national press despite the fact that it is more a day-use than destination resort. Farther from the center of Puget Sound population than its competitors at Snoqualmie and Stevens Passes, Crystal has difficulty prospering as a day-use area. User surveys indicate Washington skiers would use the area for week-long trips if more lodging, food and retail facilities were available. Like the cinemas who show the movie in order to sell you food, the real profits in the ski business are in the real estate at the base, not the ski lift ticket.

Crystal Mountain, Inc. does not own the land under the ski area. The corporation holds a long-term operating lease from the US Forest Service. Long-term Forest Service policy has prohibited condominium development, the easiest to finance. The standard of care for environmental review is quite high. These are alpine meadows with steep slopes. Basic policies of the Forest Service are supposed to be for long-term sustainability. With less timber to harvest, the Forest Service is increasingly looking around at other alternatives to create revenue. Without fees to create income, jobs disappear.

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From the Summit cont'd...

our friends in the NPS where they need to think about the Park in different ways.

As I said watch-dogging a place as large as Mt. Rainier National Park is a big job, but it needs to be done and we have a very big qualification to do it that the NPS does not have. We are Park users. We are the paying customers. MRNPA members climb the mountain, explore the high country, hike the trails, wander through the meadows, camp in the campgrounds, and engage in who knows how many other activities. We travel to all parts of the Park. We use all Park facilities. We see things in the Park that few NPS personnel ever see, and we see things that NPS personnel see all the time but don't see at all.

Watch-dogging means pointing out the things that need correcting and asking that they be corrected. It also means highlighting the things being done well and giving credit.

So what's the point of this dissertation? Two things:

First: Go to the Park. Go twice as many times as you went last year. Go 18 times if you can. Go places you have never been. Go to places you always go, but go to them in a different season, or when it's raining, or snowing. It will be well worth your time. I guarantee it. Go!

Second: When you go, look. Be a watchdog. Note it when you see something that you like or don't like. There are plenty of things to see like massive chuckholes in the Carbon River Road, or the toilet overflowing at Camp Sherman, or helicopters flying around Paradise in early August, or the road crews mowing down the Indian Paintbrush along the Stevens Canyon Road. What do you think when you see things like these? Let a Ranger know. Write a letter to the Superintendent. Call me. Some growling and a little loud barking at the right times is what makes a good watchdog.

Spring is upon us. Jane and I have already begun to plan and schedule this year's trips

to the Park. By the time you read this, we will have been there at least once. We may not make 36 days in the Park this year, but we will be there more than 18 days. We go to enjoy the Park, but we will be looking and watching while we enjoy. Give us a hand. Be

Crystal's Condos cont'd...

At the same time, Crystal has to make some decisions. In the past their planning has conformed to the Forest Service's policy of no residential facilities, while leaving open the option. Now the sanitary sewer system needs upgrading. The decisions on technology, location, and capacity will define options.

Crystal Mountain will make a case for expansion that will impress decision makers based on capacity, demand, economic impact. Present annual gross is \$10 million, with a \$3.5 million payroll. Day-use skiers spend \$21 per day, destination skiers spend \$120. Pierce County and the US Forest Service will listen carefully.

Crystal management is aware that visitation to Mt. Rainier National Park is increasing without any increase in facilities. A summer trade to balance the skiers would be good for the bottom line.

Environmental impacts have not been investigated. Air and water quality impacts have not been studied. Other questions will need to be asked.

Tom Leonard, President of Crystal Mountain, Inc. has indicated he wants the public involved in the planning process. If you would like to participate, write to him at:

Tom Leonard, President
Crystal Mountain Resort, Inc.
Post Office Box 1
Crystal Mountain, WA 98022

Eco-Volunteering

by Dick Baker

The Nature Conservancy offers energetic folks a chance to contribute to nature's preservation. TNC has an award-winning volunteer program in Washington. Activities are announced in the quarterly "VIP Newsletter" to 300 Volunteers in Preservation. The regional office in downtown Seattle coordinates volunteer activities, totaling 6500 hours last year. Kristen Mischler received an award from the national TNC office for her success in building this program.

TNC has carefully maintained a non-political stance for conserva-

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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 MNRPA.

Letters and articles from readers and members are welcomed. We reserve the right to edit for length, grammar or libel.

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Eco-Volunteers continued...

tion. The organization uses donations from members, corporations, and affiliated retailers to purchase land that is judged to be valuable for the elements it contains. These elements may be threatened animals, plants, or special geological features, such as marshlands. The underlying purpose of these land purchases and protection in their natural state is maintaining biodiversity by preventing the extinction of species and ecosystems.

TNC owns and protects 26 preserves in Washington State, mostly in the more threatened western part of the state. TNC also participates with the Washington Department of Natural Resources and with federal agencies in long-term protection.

Recently we spent a Saturday with a group that included other MRNPA members near Tumwater. We removed the Scotch Broom that is invading the world's second largest population of a rare subspecies of Indian Paintbrush on the Mima Mounds at DNR's Rocky Prairie Preserve. Other field volunteering has found us wading the mud flats of Willapa Bay counting clumps of an invading grass and preparing prairie grasslands for a controlled burn.

In addition to fieldwork, TNC offers volunteer opportunities in supporting the regional office activities on Tuesday evenings each week: speaking to groups about conservation, peopling the display booth at shows, and a few caretaking stints on the Preserves.

For more information or signing up, contact;

Kristen Mischler
217 Pine Street, Suite 1100
Seattle, WA 98101
(206) 343-4333.

America's Endangered Parks--Islands of Neglect

by Jeff Taylor and
Jake Thompson

(The following narrative is condensed from a three-part article that appeared originally in the Kansas City Star.)

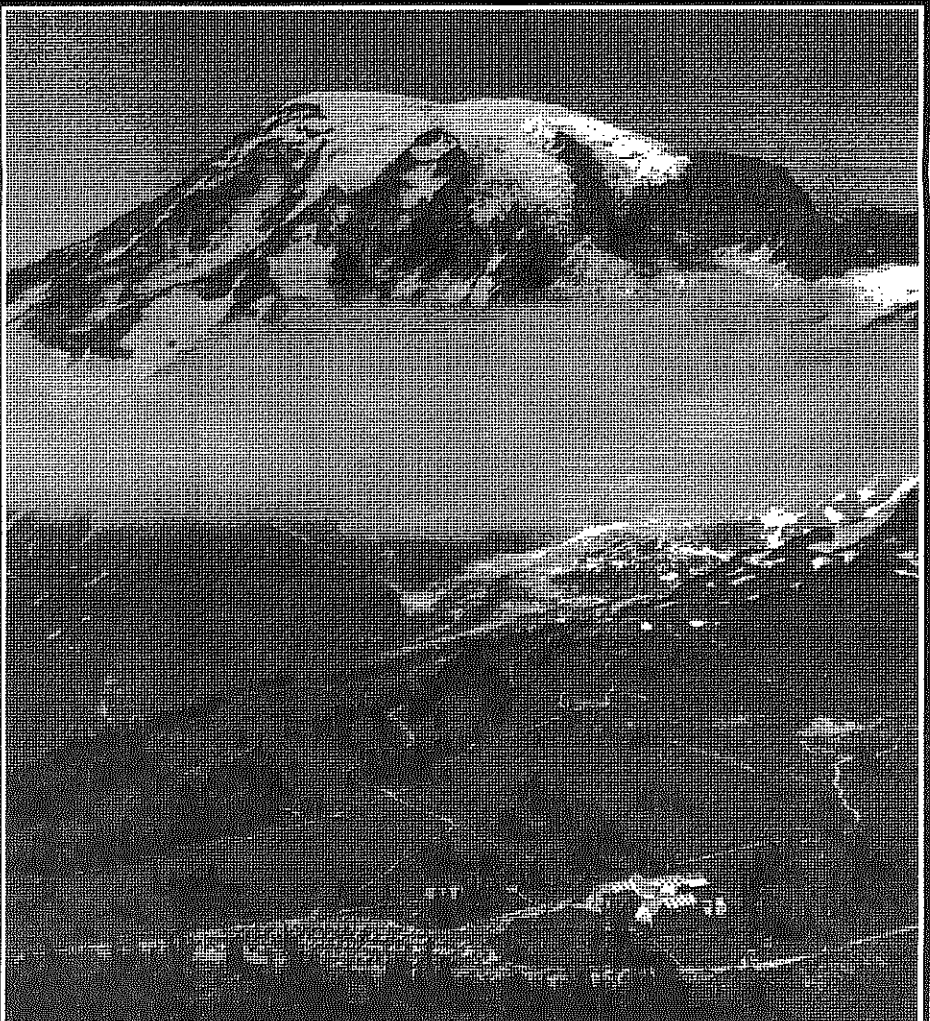
America's national parks--long a model for the world--are becoming a model of decay. Campgrounds and visitor centers have been shut down and abandoned. Historic buildings crumble. Animals and rare artifacts are

poached and plundered, while ranger staffs dwindle. Hazardous waste poisons beaches. Some animal species have disappeared. Many NPS employees worry that "islands of hope" are becoming islands of neglect.

Roger Kennedy, recently appointed Director of the NPS, calls the neglect a "disgrace", and vows to seek bigger budgets and push for reforms, although acknowledging such strong activism was a "very unhealthy" position for directors to take in the past.

Solutions are not hard to find. What is hard to find is money. In the last 10 years the Park Service budget has not kept pace with the rest of federal government. Denis Galvin, NPS Associate Director

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A Sunrise view by Ira Spring

Isles of Neglect continued ...

for Planning and Development, keeps track of maintenance needs across the system, which now encompasses more than 80 million acres. It includes 367 parks, monuments and natural wonders, 1,500 historical structures, and 8,000 miles of roads. Galvin has a list of 195 current maintenance projects with an estimated cost of \$2.2 billion, and at least another \$2.2 billion in deferred maintenance. In its 1994 budget, Congress increased parks spending to \$1.55 billion. Currently, many entry booths at many parks are never manned, so there is no one to take visitors' money. Park Service officials contend there is no incentive for rangers to collect the fees, because the cash does not go directly to the parks, but instead is deposited in the federal government's general fund.

Parks took in \$40 million in entry fees during the 1991 budget year, but could have collected \$117 by exercising more vigilance. The Clinton administration proposed increasing park entry fees and allowing parks to keep half.

Park concession operators are another key source for increasing park money. But the franchise fees they pay on income from their park stores and services are absurdly low, critics charge. The private company selling concession items at Olympic National Park earned \$2.6 million in gross revenues in 1990, and paid merely 1.5%, or \$39,000 to the Treasury Department in a franchise fee.

The Park Service has become so dominated by Congress that critics have dubbed it the "National Pork Service." The fingerprints of Congress are everywhere in the National Park Service. For the 1993 budget year, the Park Service requested \$137 million for construction.

Then Congress added \$92 million for 90 home-district projects, none of which the Park Service had sought. It's called earmarking, a process often conducted privately with just the legislators and their staffs. But in the 1990s, reacting to the huge federal deficit, Congress began cutting into the agency's operating, acquisition, and research budgets and diverting that money to pet projects.

James Ridenour, parks director under President Bush, was stunned by the amount of power Congress wielded over his agency. "We were literally being run on a day-to-day basis by members of Congress and their staffs--right down to personnel decisions," he said.

Once, the job of approving new sites was performed by a commis-

sion of scholars appointed by the Secretary of the Interior. But during the Reagan years, Congress stepped in, taking on the job itself. Of the 33 additions to the park system since 1980, the Park Service formally supported only 13.

Rick Smith, Associate Director of Resource Management in the Southwest Region, feels that, "In the last 12 years, the Service has become too timid, too intimidated by politics,...and that we need a new generation of leaders who believe in resources protection, and are willing to take risks to accomplish it, who would rather be sued by a real estate developer than by the Sierra Club."

But environmentalists worry that problems with the nation's parks are too daunting for Interior Secre-

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Some Numbers from the Paradise Naturalist

Roving	1993	1992	change
contacts	20,231	15,371	+31.2%
Hours	913	863	+5.8%
Paid staff	122 hours average per week		
Volunteers	20 hours		

Number of 'Do-Better' tickets issued to Paradise 'meadow-wanderers' in 1993:

Short-cutting	351	266	+31.9%
avoiding snow	1717	328	+423.5%
a better view	575	397	+44.8%
photos	398	257	+54.9%
flower picking	66	95	-44.0%
Meadow picnics	145	203	-40.0%
Dogs on trails	27	33	-22.2%
Mountain bikes	3	0	

Volunteers... Seven volunteers contributed 196 hours and contacted 3134 visitors during the summer of 1993. In 1994, more volunteers are needed!

Isles of Neglect continued ...

tary Bruce Babbitt and Parks Director Roger Kennedy. In 1954 Park Service Conrad Wirth also considered the Parks to be in a state of crisis. The number of visitors had swelled from 10 million to more than 54 million in a decade, which prompted Wirth to coin the phrase, "The people are loving the parks to death."

Wirth submitted a proposal to get the system back in order, which resulted in a \$725 million effort to rebuild roads, protect old holdings and acquire new ones. But the parks are again in decline a quarter-century later, and have since doubled in size.

The challenge is finding a better balance between serving tourists, a tradition deeply embedded within the system, and protecting the resources from exploitation. Supervisory Ranger Scot McElveen feels, "As long as decisions are based on political interests and not on sound biological and historical research, then the promise of 'conservation' in the National Park Service mission will go unfulfilled."

Kansas governor and former Secretary of Interior Mike Hayden says, "The executive branch doesn't know whether the Park Service Director should administer or whether the administration should be by the Secretary of the Interior or by the White House." The Park Service has had seven directors in the past two decades, the same number as in its first 57 years.

The political nature of appointing or keeping a parks director troubles the agency's field staff. Each new administration appoints a new director. Already some Park employees are privately expressing concerns about their new director, who they say is enthusiastic but inexperienced.

Conservationist David Brower, former head of the Sierra Club, who

played a major role in creating seven national parks, says he is optimistic about the new administration, but says Americans should not wait for Washington to fix their national parks. He urges them to get involved.

Grizzly Bear Recovery

by John Titland

In 1975 the grizzly bear was listed as a "threatened" species in the continental United States under the provisions of the Endangered Species Act(ESA). Listing under the ESA triggered a variety of actions, all intended to result in recovery of grizzly bears in those areas where populations existed at the time of listing.

In 1982, per the requirements of the ESA, a Grizzly Bear Recovery Plan was issued. This plan identified four recovery zones: Northern Continental Divide, Cabinet-Yaak, Selkirks, and Yellowstone. It also identified two evaluation zones where recovery was believed to be possible, but for which insufficient information was available. These two areas were the Bitterroots and the Northern Cascades.

For each of the four recovery zones, a chapter was included in the Grizzly Bear Recovery Plan. Chapters for the two evaluation zones were not included.

In 1976 evaluation of the North Cascades began. The evaluation zone was generally defined as the Forest Service and National Park lands south of the Canadian Border and north of Highway I-90. The zone boundaries were determined as much by political considerations as by biological considerations; as for example, the Colville Confederated Tribes stated specifically that all their

tribal lands should be excluded from evaluation.

Within the zone boundaries an evaluation team of biologists set out to determine if the North Cascades provided suitable habitat for grizzly bears and if any grizzly bears were currently resident.

The evaluation was completed in 1991 with the evaluation team concluding that an adequate amount of good grizzly bear habitat is available and that evidence indicates grizzly bears are present. The evaluation team estimated the number of grizzly bears to be 10 to 20.

During the evaluation, no grizzly bears were found by the evaluation team members. The evidence of the presence of grizzly bears was several clear footprints, a skull, and multiple bear sightings made by the public that could not be positively confirmed by the evaluation team as grizzly bears. Also in 1991, a group of bear biologists and the Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee (headed by the US Fish and Wildlife Service) reviewed the results of the North Cascades evaluation and both groups agreed that the North Cascades should be designated as a Grizzly Bear Recovery Zone based on the evidence collected.

In 1992, a North Cascades Grizzly Bear Steering Committee was established by the Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee. The Steering Committee was chartered to write a chapter to be included in the Grizzly Bear Recovery Plan covering the North Cascades Recovery Zone. A draft of the North Cascades Chapter of the Grizzly Bear Recovery Plan was issued for comment in late 1993 and comments were due in February 1994.

As you can tell from the previous narrative, the process to arrive at a draft North Cascades Chapter

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Beargrass from Paradise by Ira Spring

Grizzlies cont'd...

for the Grizzly Bear Recovery Plan has been long and slow. Despite efforts to keep the process open to the public, it has also been widely misunderstood.

The first thing that needs to be clearly understood is that the draft North Cascades Chapter does not deal with the question of if grizzly bear populations are to be restored but how grizzly bears are to be restored. The decision that grizzly bear populations are to be restored to health numbers was made in 1975 when grizzly bears were listed under the Endangered Species Act.

It should also be understood that approval of the North Cascades Chapter to the Grizzly Bear Recovery Plan does not mean that grizzly bears will be immediately introduced into the North Cascades. A decision to proceed with introductions of animals to augment the existing populations can only be made after completing the decision processes required by the National Environmental Policy Act. This process will again be open to the public and will al-

low for public review and comment.

As for the draft North Cascades chapter to Grizzly Bear Recovery Plan that was submitted for public comment, Mount Rainier National Park Associates submitted a letter of comments. The comments generally fell into two categories: protection of bears and Recovery Zone boundaries.

We commented that the draft chapter was not sufficiently forceful in protecting the existing population of animals. The chapter should clearly state that all human-caused mortality of grizzly bears in and around the North Cascades Recovery Zone must be zero, and all management steps available to eliminate the possibility of human-caused mortality must be taken. These steps should include prohibiting the hunting of black bears and cougars using packs of hounds.

Both of these "sport" hunting methods are legal in Washington, and if allowed within the Grizzly Bear Recovery Area, both have the potential for injury to or death of a grizzly bear. New road construction should not be allowed within the Recovery Zone. Most

grizzly bear deaths are near roads, caused by poachers who are willing to kill an animal for an illegal trophy or to sell bear body parts on the black market.

The second category of our comments related to the boundaries of the Grizzly Bear Recovery Zone. As stated previously, the boundaries of the North Cascades evaluation zone did not include any areas south of Highway I-90. A more ecologically consistent southern boundary would be the Columbia River.

Mt. Rainier National Park should be included in the Recovery Zone, as should the area northwest of Mt. Rainier where grizzly bear activity was discovered last year. In this regard we commented that the Grizzly Bear Recovery Zone should be enlarged to include areas south of I-90, and private lands and Washington State Department of Wildlife and Department of Natural Resources lands should not be excluded.

We also made other comments about land use: No area should be excluded from the Recovery Zone because of lack of information about grizzly bear activities.

The final North Cascades Chapter of the Grizzly Bear Recovery Plan is scheduled to be released late this year.

Grizzly bears and their recovery in the North Cascades have become very contentious issues within many organizations in Washington. Grizzly bears have the second lowest rate of reproduction of all the mammals in North America. Given that the Grizzly Bear Recovery Plan is wildly successful and that introduction of animals into the North Cascades does take place, it is unlikely that in our grandchildren's lifetimes there will be more than 40 to 60 grizzly bears in the entire state of Washington.

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Recovery continued ...

A group of trained biologists looked for five years and did not get a sighting or even a photograph of a grizzly bear. I don't expect I will ever see one.

For those fearful of encountering grizzly bears or otherwise interested, Wayne Buchanan, a biologist at the Woodland Park Zoo and current President of the Great Bear Society, offers a very informative course on bears through the Seattle Mountaineers. Wayne provides good information on bear biology and uses that information to show how you can avoid negative bear experiences, both with grizzlies and black bears. I highly recommend this course for anyone who plans to go out into grizzly bear country—that is, anywhere in the Cascades of Washington State.

A Letter on Grizzly Bear Recovery

by John Titland

January 15, 1994

US Fish & Wildlife Service
3704 Griffin Lane SE, Suite 102
Olympia, WA 98501

Subject: Comments to the Draft
North Cascades Recovery Zone
Chapter Grizzly Bear Recovery
Plan

Dear Sir:

Please accept the following comments concerning the Draft North Cascades Recovery Zone Chapter of the Grizzly Bear Recovery Plan:

1. The Draft Chapter is not sufficiently forceful in defining actions to promote grizzly bear protection and reduces problems affecting grizzly bears in the North Cascades Recovery Zone. If the Draft

Chapter is correct in stating that grizzly bear populations in the North Cascades have a high probability of extinction, then it must define the most effective actions to promote population recovery and the immediate steps to be taken. If population extinction is a highly probable event, then delays in taking effective steps cannot be tolerated and should not be diluted by political or other considerations.

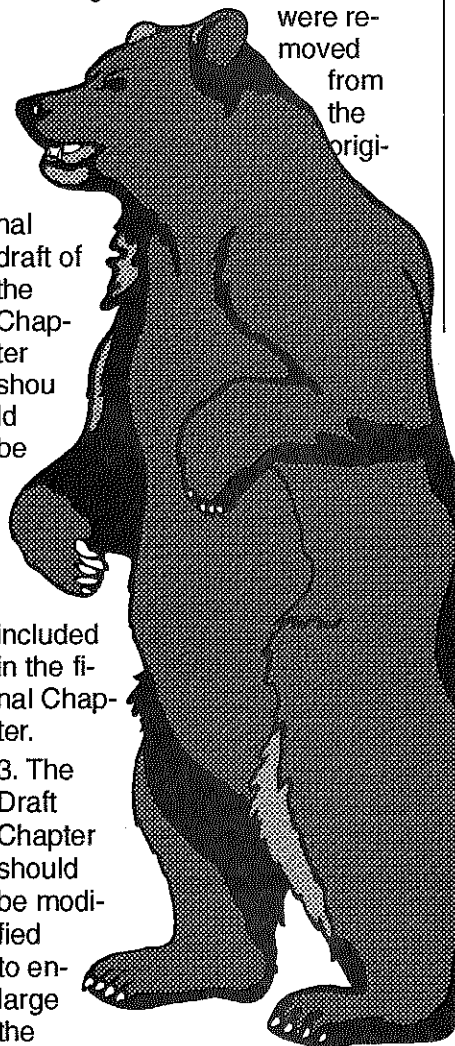
2. Biological considerations that

original draft of the Chapter should be

included in the final Chapter.

3. The Draft Chapter should be modified to enlarge the

North Cascades Recovery Zone to include areas south of Highway I-90. With evidence of grizzly bear activities near Mt. Rainier National Park, areas south of I-90 must be considered to be grizzly bear habitat appropriate for inclusion in the North Cascades Recovery Zone.



were removed from the original

4. No area should be excluded from the consideration as parts of the North Cascades Recovery Zone because of the lack of information about grizzly bear activity in the area. Lack of information results from the Recovery Team being directed to not evaluate many areas. Lack of information is not an indication of lack of grizzly bear activity in these unevaluated areas.

5. Private land should not be excluded from the North Cascades Recovery Zone. The recovery zones in Montana include private land. The evidence of grizzly bear activity northwest of Mt. Rainier National Park is on private land.

6. All Washington State Department of Wildlife and Department of National Resources lands inside or contiguous with the North Cascades Recovery Zone should be included in the North Cascades Recovery Zone and subject to the Chapter requirements.

7. All roadless areas within the North Cascades Recovery Zone should be designated Management Situation #1.

8. All areas within the North Cascades Recovery Zones, where available information is not sufficient to determine the Management Situation classification, should be managed so as not to preclude classification as Management Situation #1 or #2 at a later date.

9. New road construction should not be allowed within the North Cascades Recovery Zone.

10. The North Cascades Recovery Zone should be analyzed very carefully to assure that it contains adequate, low elevation, spring range type, grizzly bear habitat. If sufficient spring range is not included, the North Cascades Recovery Zone should be enlarged to include the available habitat.

continued on next page

Recovery continued ...

11. Black bear hunting over bait should be prohibited in the North Cascades Recovery Zone and be discouraged in all adjacent areas. Intentionally placing human food so that black bears will find it creates the real possibility that grizzly bears will also find it and thus become habituated to human food and being in the proximity of humans. Habituating grizzly bears to food provided by humans will eventually lead to some kind of negative grizzly bear-human contact that so many humans fear—with the predictable outcome that all grizzly bears will lose. All activity that habituates grizzly bears to food provided by humans is unacceptable.

12. Black bear and cougar hunting using hounds and pursuit hunting using hounds should be prohibited in the North Cascades Recovery Zone. Apart from the fact that running hounds after animals is not sport but rather animal harassment, hound hunting will ultimately lead to a confrontation between a grizzly bear, hounds, and hunters. The grizzly bear will likely be injured or killed. The risk of this eventual outcome is not acceptable when measured against the small amount of questionable recreation provided by hound hunting and hound pursuit of black bears and cougars.

13. The Draft Chapter should clearly state that human-caused mortality of grizzly bears in and around the North Cascades Recovery Zone must be zero and that all management steps available to eliminate human-caused grizzly bear mortality must be taken.

14. The NEPA process should begin immediately to determine if the grizzly bear populations in the North Cascades Recovery Zone are to be augmented by introductions of animals. Conducting the NEPA process and arriving at de-

cisions will take several years. If the ultimate decision is to augment the population by introductions, the program has the best chance of succeeding if it takes place before the native populations of animals goes extinct. Therefore, a decision must be made as soon as possible.

A Rove Through Paradise

by Sharon Pankiewicz

I cannot remember a time when my family did not go to Mt. Rainier. Nor can I remember when time spent at Rainier did not fill me with awe and inspiration. It is my one true and honest addiction! The Mountain has given me so much over the years that it was now my turn to give a little back. Thus it just felt natural to answer the call for volunteers.

This past summer I volunteered to work with Karla Tanner and her staff of naturalists. After going through a training session, I was ready to spend a few days a week as a meadow rover. As a meadow rover, I roamed the trails at Paradise answering questions and encouraging Park visitors to preserve the alpine environment by staying on the trails. For me it was a very positive experience.

Mt. Rainier receives over 2 million visitors a year and a large percentage of them visit Paradise. On any given day the number of tourists can be as numerous and as varied as the wildflowers that grace the meadows. Human impact on the meadows can be swift and significant. Fifteen feet tromping on vegetation can destroy it. One only needs to look at the numerous "social trails" meandering through the Paradise area to understand what could happen if the meadows are not protected. And one only needs to observe the difficult and time-consuming work the re-vegetation crew does to comprehend what a massive job it is to reclaim lost habitat.

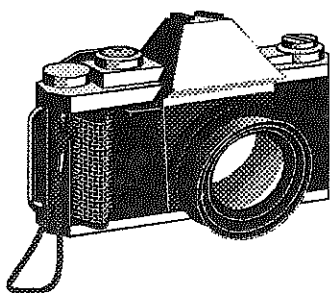
The general public is cooperative if approached in a positive manner about staying on the trails. For me, as an educator, each contact with a Park visitor was an opportunity to educate that person about the unique fragility of the meadows. A one-on-one contact often resulted in a visitor realizing that the signs were not just decorative, but were actually serving a purpose.

It was music to my ears to hear one person tell another, "Please stay on the trail." When one is visiting the Park, I feel that one should not be afraid to approach people in a positive manner about the necessity of staying on the

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You are Welcome To Attend A MRNPA Board Meeting

**The Board meets the 3rd Thursday of odd-numbered months
(November, January, etc...) from 7:00 pm to 9:00 pm
at the Kent Public Library, located at
212 2nd Ave N in Kent, Washington.**



We're having a Contest!

**Your best photo of Mt. Rainier
may be a winner!**

Categories:

**Winter
Summer Scenics
Nature -
flowers, birds or animals**

- Judges will include Ira Spring
- The "Best of Categories" will be displayed at Mt. Rainier National Park this season.
- Winning photos will be published in future MRNPA News.

Photos must be black & white glossy prints and larger than 2.5 x 3.5. Send your photo to MRNPA Contest, ATTN: MRNPA EDITOR, 5017 38th Ave NE, Seattle 98105. Please enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope if

Roving continued ...

trails. After all, the maintaining of a quality environment at the Park is a responsibility that must be shared by each of us.

The biggest problem this summer was caused by the late snow melt, resulting in people cutting the trails. I found the Park staff to be very dedicated and professional, and they spent numerous hours roving the meadows. Moreover, they have worked to develop additional opportunities, such as a slide program and a handout available in seven languages for people to learn about meadow restoration projects. Unfortunately, the Park does not have enough personnel to be in all the places where they are needed all day.

Consequently, I see a great need for people to volunteer, because willing volunteers can provide vital support to our national park by offering their time and talents.

However, the shortage of available housing does make it difficult for the Park to accommodate volunteers. I was fortunate to be able to stay with some members of the re-vegetation crew. One volunteer spent a portion of the summer camping at Cougar Rock until housing could be arranged.

I would encourage anyone with time to give to consider volunteering in the park. If one is willing to camp, or has ones own self-contained housing, or is even willing to be a "commuting rove", then one has helped to remove a significant barrier for the Park to accept volunteers. Mt. Rainier

National Park has other opportunities for volunteers beside meadow roving.

It is my understanding that some job descriptions are currently being developed that better match volunteers to their desires and talents. One only needs to contact the Park Office and a volunteer application will be mailed. Touch the future! Volunteering is worth the time and effort!

For more information, contact:

Clay & Dixie Gatchel
Volunteer Coordinators
Mt. Rainier National Park
PO Box 1344
Renton WA 98057-1344

The Growth Management Act's Effect on Mt. Rainier's Gateway Communities

by Van Perdue

The Growth Management Act, along with some unexpected federal funding, may be prodding communities outside Mount Rainier to plan how they will handle increased traffic to the Park that will result from projected population increases in western Washington.

The latest response of the Pierce County Executive to the County Comprehensive Plan proposed by the Citizen's Advisory group recognized that rural gateway communities are distinct from other unincorporated rural population centers. His recommendation formally recognized them as one of three categories or rural centers with their own problems and needs. As incorporated entities, the towns of Wilkeson and Carbonado are responsible for their own planning and were therefore not designated in the county plan. Once the county plan is in place, it will serve as a policy document to guide the development of community plans.

Meanwhile the Park Service has recognized the impact of its facilities on neighboring communities and is helping to provide funding for them to plan how they will absorb the impact of inevitably greater use. It has been active for years in trying to develop community interest. The three communities of Ashford, Elbe, and Greenwater are currently benefiting from this newfound benevolence in the form of NPS-funded

planning assistance from the Sonoran Institute.

Luther Prost of the Sonoran Institute has held focus group meetings in the affected communities to gauge community interest in planning their own destiny and reportedly the interest is there. Prost plans another round of meetings in March to help the communities organize to move the planning process along.

Rick Adams, a local citizen of the Elbe-Ashford community, has been active for years in trying to develop community interest. Asked for his own personal vision of how his community should look in 5-10 years, Adams said he would like both communities to revive their own architectural heritage from around the turn of the century when both were thriving communities. He said several buildings from that time remain and could serve as models for any future development. He noted that his parents, who are major landowners in the area, have for several years tried to put together a destination resort. In his view, such a resort would serve more to absorb increased visitor impact than to add more visitors.

Adams was quick to assert that it will be the community more than any individual which will determine how the area looks in the future, but he is hopeful that with the assistance of the Sonoran Institute, the gateway communities will formulate plans that will avoid the helter-skelter growth patterns of the past. He was adamant that strip development will be avoided.

An interesting aspect of the planning process in Adams' view is that the gateway communities will require many services normally thought of as urban services. Pierce County has been under attack in recent months for trying to establish a sewer system in unincorporated areas, yet in Adams' view the gateway communities

will need sewers if the anticipated growth is to be accommodated. He also mentioned the need for increased police protection and specifically mentioned the failure of the US Forest Service to adequately police its land outside the Park, choosing instead to block public access.

Asked how his community will fit in transportation plans currently being formulated by the Park Service, state and county, he indicated the Puget Sound Regional Council is working on coordinating all of the transportation plans. He said the proposal by the City of Tacoma to provide a train to the mountain is far from dead. He attributed the recent loss of federal funding to a weak grant proposal and said the proposal overlooked Rep., Jolene Unsoeld's efforts to amend the Jones Act so that coastal communities can be more competitive in attracting cruise ships. He anticipates Unsoeld will be successful, and a well-planned marketing effort will attract cruise passengers to Washington's national parks. He also felt Tacoma had failed to work effectively with the town of Morton, which he thinks wants and could benefit from a rail connection with the coastal cities.

Adams also related that the thinks outside-the-Park trails should be part of the planning effort, and he has contacted the Rails to Trails Coalition to explore the trail potential of abandoned railroads in the area.

Where does this leave us as advocates for protection of the Park? Do we view this as an effort to further increase visitation to a park that already shows the strains of overuse in many areas? Does it provide an opportunity to establish a transportation system that will reduce the number of private passenger cars inside the Park? Might it in fact result in some of the communities becoming destinations in themselves,

which would divert some visitors away from the Park? Can we as an organization or as individual citizens have an effect on the outcome?

Interesting questions, I think, and questions we should confront.

Dates for MRNP Trail Parties

by Dick Baker

Come and enjoy helping Mt. Rainier. Associated benefits: good exercise, clean air, neat folks to work with, sanctimonious feelings that come with volunteer work on our Mountain.

Because of trail staff changes, our work will probably be needed on the north side of Mt. Rainier this year.

May 21, 1994 meet at Ipsut Creek Campground at 9:00 AM. We'll be out by 5 P.M..

August 20-21, 1994. Meet at White River Campground at 9 AM probably. This will be our weekend work party. After the day's work, we will have a potluck dinner, story-trading by the fire, and an overnight car camp. Sunday hikes are in various groups in various places.

September 17, 1994. Another Saturday work party, location to be announced.

Please mark your calendars now to reserve these three weekends for Mt. Rainier. Call Dick Baker at (206) 282-1064 when you decide.

The Chenuis Valley Should Be Saved

by John Thompson

The Chenuis Trail exists! In the Park it is called the North Boundary trail, but since hardly a half mile of it is within the Park, it is ignored and its use is discouraged. Three more miles of the fine trail do exist within the Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest, but the trail is not indicated on Forest Service maps.

The trail exists! And it has some history. The Civilian Conservation Corps labored mightily on their last trail in the area. World War II cut the trail short—literally—at Camp Gunnysack. The trail's end was to be a junction at Hurricane Gap with the north/south trail along Independence Ridge. Not only would the trail serve as a boundary patrol trail for the Park, but also as an access for the Forest Service to a remote section of the forest.

My concerns for the Chenuis Valley are based on the Forest Service plans to log in the area. The proposal includes road building and involves 4400 acres between Mt. Rainier National Park and the Clearwater Wilderness. Included are suggestions to improve the recreation opportunities at Coplay Lake, which lies in the midst of past clearcuts. I feel Gunnysack Camp and the Chenuis Valley, even though about half was logged in the sixties, would make a far better campground. This action would protect the trees and the north side of the Park, assist in relieving the overburdened facilities of the Park, and certainly enhance the Clearwater Wilderness Area. Additionally, and perhaps more importantly, the wildlife habitat would be pre-

served intact. After all, one of the main reasons for the Clearwater's creation was to act as a wintering area, a lowland old growth forest. But the route that has been left for wildlife is the section of land containing Independence Ridge, a one-mile wide stretch for the whole of the north side of the Park.

Currently, the Forest Plan identifies the area as "Roaded Natural" not "Timber". Many good things can be done under that classification for recreation enhancement, but logging can be carried on as well, and that is what the current Environmental Impact Statement addresses. I would like to see the scope of the EIS include a projected analysis of the Chenuis Valley as a potential camping area. I would like to see a Spotted Owl study done in the area since it is prime habitat and thus should be included in the EIS. Since the Chenuis Valley is in such a unique position, wedged in between the Park and Wilderness, caused by the 1960 incursion of road 1820,

I think it should be treated differently than a site for logging. I think logging would be, to use the Forest Service terms, "subjecting the area to an irreversible commitment of resources." In the cited 'Plan' the Forest Service makes much of the burgeoning population needs of the region. Surely the agency should not irreversibly commit such a beautiful and unique area. Their logging activities have already taken half the resource. I believe the remaining half should be left for the other interests of multiple use.

I think we should bring our concerns to every congressman in the country, explaining why that 'wedge' should be removed from harvest schedules, and why we must quietly turn to them because it is too 'hot' an issue for our delegation.