

MRNPA



NEWS

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FROM THE SUMMIT

The motto of Mt. Rainier National Park Associates is to maintain, restore, nurture, protect and appreciate Mt. Rainier National Park. While these words may have different



Photo by Ira Spring

Highway 410-Lake Tipsoo

meanings and significance to each of us, we join together to assure that the Park will continue to be there for our neighbors and families to appreciate in the future. This requires us to be ever vigilant and to speak our minds if we feel the Park will be affected by our recommended action. We have several issues facing us this year. First, the National Park Service is considering a proposal for a technical amendment to the Washington National Parks Wilderness Bill. Second, the Park Service is releasing an environmental assessment for renovation of Washington State Route 410, otherwise known as the Mather Parkway. I request that each of you review the articles, request more information if you feel you need it, and consider the implications of the proposal. Please let our organization and the National Park Service know how you stand on these issues. Save the evenings of August 1st and 2nd to attend the public hearing on the Mather Parkway to be held in Naches and Enumclaw respectively. Each of these proposals can have a profound effect on the Park as it currently exists. Now is the time to be heard and to help preserve the Park for future generations.
Pat Smith

HIGHWAY 410 REVISITED

Recently you received an ACTION ALERT from the Board of Trustees of Mount Rainier

National Park Associates asking you to write a letter of comment concerning the proposal to renovate Washington State Highway 410 inside the Park. If you have not written a letter yet, please dig out the ACTION ALERT, re-read it, and write a letter before the August 17th deadline. Your letters are critical to getting changes made which will reduce the negative impact on the Park. Some background information may help to explain the situation and why it is so important that every member write a letter of comment.

An Environmental Assessment (EA) is the planning document that is issued when the environmental impacts of a proposed project are considered to be minor. Like an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), an EA outlines the proposed project, identifies the various alternatives that were considered, states the preferred alternative and tries to make assessments of environmental impacts. Also like an EIS, the EA is issued first in draft form to allow interested parties to review it and make comments. The project planners must address the comments made to the draft before the EA is issued in final form. Negative comments to the draft EA can force changes in a proposed project when the comments point out facts, impacts, or public opinion not originally considered. the draft EA entitled "Renovate Washington State

Route 410 (Mather Memorial Parkway)" was issued by three agencies: the National Park Service, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and the Washington State Dept. of Transportation (WSDOT). The FHWA and WSDOT are involved because they will provide the funding for the highway renovation. It will probably come as no surprise that the FHWA and WSDOT have different standards for highways than does the NPS. The preferred alternative in the EA appears to have resulted from a compromise set of standards-where the two agencies controlling the money compromised the least.

As an example, one of the alternatives that was listed as considered but rejected was a proposal to resurface the entire roadway, restricting all work to within the existing paved section of the roadway. In the opinion of the Board of Trustees, this alternative is preferable to the alternative that the EA identifies as preferred because no trees would be cut. The rationale for rejecting this alternative is stated in the EA: "WSDOT and FHWA officials indicate that a simple resurfacing of the existing road would not qualify for funding under the Public Lands program as the resulting roadway would not meet the State's standards of safety. To consider this alternative would require identifying another funding source." Stated another way, "If

everybody won't play by our rules, then we are going to take our money and leave." No indication was given that the resurfaced highway would be unsafe. It just would not meet standards and the WSDOT and FHWA are not willing to modify their standards. It's pretty clear that WSDOT and FHWA have more interest in preserving their standards than they do in preserving trees inside Mount Rainier National Park.

Until now all the planning on the proposal to renovate SR 410 and the discussions about funding and standards have been conducted without the input of one key interested party: the public. Now it's our turn! Do we accept that SR 410 inside Mount Rainier National Park needs renovation? If we do, do we want it done as stated in the preferred alternative of the draft EA? Do we agree that cutting over 1,175 trees is an acceptable environmental impact? The EA process requires that we, the public, as interested parties, now be given the opportunity to review the proposal and make our feelings known. We should feel no hesitation about doing so. It's not their money they are spending. It's our money! It's also our highway and our National Park!

Please write a letter of comment. It's easy and it's very important. State your opposition to widening the road corridor, or your outrage that any proposal would allow more than 1,175

trees to be cut in eleven miles of highway renovation. Think up something really memorable (or unprintable) to say about cutting 1,100 trees along only two miles of SR 410 inside the northern boundary of the Park. Argue that the standards used by the FHWA and the WSDOT were intended to serve the public, not to result in damaging scenic beauty and aesthetic appeal of a priceless public resource like Mount Rainier National Park. Tell them to drop the whole idea and leave SR 410 the way it is. Say what you feel. But please write a letter before the August 17 deadline and sent it to:

Superintendent, 410

Comments

Mt. Rainier National Park
Tahoma Woods, Star Route
Ashford, WA 98304

Report on
ANNUAL MEETING
May 22, 1990

Mount Rainier National Park Associates held its Annual Meeting at the Seattle Mountaineers Clubrooms on May 22nd. The meeting was preceded by dinner at Ivar's Captain's Table located near the Clubrooms. Those attending agreed the food was good, and the meeting very informative. President Pat Smith reviewed the accomplishments of MRNPA over the past 12 months, and probable issues of concern for our organization in the upcoming year. Of particular interest was our outstanding success in

promoting wilderness designation for Mount Rainier National Park. We are also closely monitoring projects such as the Sunrise Lodge relocation or replacement, the Paradise Ski Dormitory renovation, the Highway 410 vista proposal, and the Westside Road repairs. In the upcoming year we will be looking at involvement in the new General Management Plan as it becomes available for comment and public review. President Pat Smith made clear that the organization is on track for tracking issues critical to Rainier National Park, including the very serious issues outside the Park. She stressed the importance of citizen input in expressing concern about these issues, and that the owl setbacks will not be a panacea for boundary issues at Mt. Rainier.

Pat Smith introduced MRNP Superintendent Neal Guse who commented on issues and concerns at the Park which may be of interest to MRNPA. The Environmental Assessment (EA) on the Highway 410 project is available for public comment. (MRNPA members who would like a copy may contact John Titland at 206-747-1698). Public hearings on this proposal will be held at Enumclaw and Naches, and the NPS is looking at a probable 45-day comment period. Due to snow conditions running about 1 1/2 times normal, the Stevens Canyon Road was opened a few days late.

The National Park Inn at Longmire is ready for occupancy, and Guse says he felt the contractors did a fine job reconstructing the Inn. (See related story in this issue.) So far the concessionaire has not requested any increased rates. The Park Service presently has some monies available for a new General Management Plan, but Guse feels more money will become available next year. He does not foresee any new development occurring within the Park in the near future. He commented on a visitor survey on attitudes toward mass transit within the Park, which implied that although a majority favor such a system, a majority also did not want their personal freedoms restricted. He said the Park Service does not know how an out-of-Park shuttle area would be financed or where it would be located. He also cited carrying capacity as a future issue. A General Management Plan for these issues might not be available until Spring 1991. Guse says that of the four alternatives for the Sunrise Lodge, he believes that complete replacement is the most logical, due to the deteriorating condition of the old Lodge. The Carbon River Road repairs are now complete, but the West Side Road may not reopen until mid-October. It will require 1/2 million dollars for repairs. A proposed cross-country ski route is being proposed for the Mowich Lake area, which

would involve perhaps two ski huts. Cooperators on the project would include Washington Dept. of Natural Resources, and Champion Paper. Guse concluded his remarks by saying the National Park Service will celebrate its 75th anniversary next year. If MRNPA wishes to become involved in the celebration, we should be giving the Park Service our input very soon. The six suspected poachers on the north side of the Park were given \$500 fines, lost their rifles, and were restricted from entering the Park for a specified period of time.

Guest speaker at the Annual Meeting was Carolyn L. Driedger of the U.S. Geological Service in Vancouver, WA. She presented an excellent and informative history and survey of the glaciology of Mt. Rainier, focusing on five major glaciers and their characteristics and individual histories. Driedger presented a visual tour of the glaciers through a slide presentation and narrative.

Nominating Committee Chair Sue Stann presented the membership with a slate of candidates for the Board of Directors and Executive Committee. The following candidates were unanimously elected by voice vote:

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Pat Smith	Van Perdue
Bob Aegerter	Jim Baker
Polly Dyer	Sally Soest

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
OFFICERS

President Pat Smith
Vice-President Sally Soest
Secretary Roger Garrett
Treasurer John Titland

Respectfully Submitted,
Roger Garrett

SUMMER TRAIL PARTY

Our sixth annual Mount Rainier National Park Associates work party will be held Saturday, August 25th at Paradise. You can camp Friday and/or Saturday nights at Cougar Rock campground, where a group campsite has been reserved, but you can also simply come up for the trail work party. There is no entry fee or camping fee for volunteers. You do not need special skills because our work will be directed again by Steve Scott, and all tools will be provided by the Park. No one is required to work harder or longer than they wish. Bring only your lunch, water or juice, gloves, boots, and a long-sleeved work shirt. Our project will be in the Pebble Creek/Skyline trails area. On Saturday night we will have a potluck dinner with lots of good stories, singing, and spontaneous entertainment. Sunday those who wish to hike may hike; others may play, relax and enjoy The Mountain. Come for any part of the weekend. For further information or if you want to volunteer, call Shari Dowd, 527-2181.

AN OLD FRIEND IS BACK
THE PARADISE INN IS
RENOVATED

Remember the National Park Inn at Mount Rainier? How many times have you driven by it in the past year on your way to Paradise and wondered if they were ever going to get the renovation project done? It is finally complete, and believe it or not, the job was accomplished within a couple of weeks of the planned deadline after a construction period of 13 months. And what a change! The outside of the structure still retains most of its historic integrity when viewed from the roadway side, but drive around to the rear of the Inn (which is now the front entrance), and you will see some dramatic but pleasing changes to the facility. The most obvious are the striking portico that guides visitors into the main lobby, and a veranda that runs the length of a new two-story addition which includes new guest rooms and the kitchen. Even though most visitors will find it difficult to distinguish where the original building ends and the new sections begin, enough differences were factored into the project to insure a distinction. A look at a picture of the old inn shows shingles on the roof only. The most obvious change is the appearance of wood shingles on both the road and sides of the extension. The spacious lobby area now includes a

private lounge area for guests, in the space once occupied by the gift shop. A reconstruction of the historic fireplace means that visitors can still enjoy the atmosphere of a log fire just as have the many visitors over the 74 years of the life of the inn. Nine new sleeping rooms have been added, including seven upstairs and two downstairs that are handicapped accessible. Current health and safety codes have been met, yet the historic flavor and character of the old structure have been retained. The old lady still stands proud.

Cy Hentges,
Management Assistant

TO PROTECT THE PARK

MRNPA is an organization dedicated to look after the welfare of the Park. We have quickly learned that our concerns and efforts to this end must often take place out of and away from the Park, that our worries are not always as obvious as elk wallows in high meadows, that our enterprise must embrace philosophies remote from pristine tarns, ice caves, or primeval forests. Society is just now warming up to the concept that the powerful interests of industry, economy, and government have been expropriating natural resources for personal gain since the country was founded. To protect the Park we must be concerned with

what happens around it, and we cannot limit ourselves and our concerns to the ecology without considering how humans fit in. Loggers are in a terrible sweat, and for the most part, they have been led down the primrose path by industry, technology, and a government policy that would have allowed them to eliminate the resource they felt was theirs. The Park is surrounded by trees, public and private. Policies affecting industry affect the Park. Affecting industry affects the logger. Since our society now seems to feel no industry should fail, perhaps we should promote a bail-out of the loggers...not the industry. The loggers have put their lives on the line and their homes in hock to pay for the tools they need to pursue their line of work. Those giant trucks, yarders, and loaders are extremely expensive, and their owners must move from cut to cut to make payments and feed their children. Further, the industry demands efficiency. Going and gone are the labor intensive activities of the mill and forest. Compound the industry's lack of concern for the loggers' welfare with its environmental desecration in the name of the bottom line, and the timber industry stands without the laurels it would like to wear, George Weyerhaeuser's affirmations to the contrary.

Perhaps to protect the Park, the loggers, and the forest,

we should urge our legislators to reconsider the government's relation to the industry, and as a new approach, begin a "buy-back" program for loggers. The precedent has been set: dairy herds, fishing boats, farm crops, and even the S&Ls. Certainly some of the costs should be carried by the industry itself. It is the industry that ships our resources overseas, closes mills, harasses labor, and influences government. And couldn't the great land acquisitions and holdings be considered a form of subsidy?

To protect the Park, think again about how the tree-cutting people got into this mess. Spotted owl indeed!

John Thompson

BOARD MEETING

June 11, 1990

Andy's Tukwila Station

Pat Smith introduced Dale Crane of NPCA. Dale's background includes 10 years working with a natural resources sub-committee on national parks issues in Washington, D.C. Dale Crane discussed review of the Draft Environmental Assessment to renovate Washington State Route 410 on the east side of the Park. There are clearly three options for MRNPA to consider: A) The National Park Service and the State have not applied for a 404 Wetlands Permit, although the EA includes impacts on wetlands. B) The EA does not

consider impacts to the spotted owl, and must get approval from the wildlife department, C) Although the plan is touted as a "repair" of Highway 410, it is clearly a "reconstruction," and therefore, requires a full Environmental Statement. John Titland commented that it should be easy to generate public opinion on the cutting of 1100 trees within the right of way. Jim Baker said that we should demand the NPS produce a "need for action" statement along with the draft EA. Titland: The bridges do need repair, and are in very bad condition. Baker: The full EA will be out June 15th for public comment, and we need to see what it contains before making our comments. Titland presented a letter he has drafted for Board approval to be mailed as an "action alert" to our membership. The Board commended John for his work on this issue and suggested that a concise statement detailing what members should write, and to whom, be included in the report. We prefer to repair the existing roadway only.

Bob Aegerter discussed the request from Neal Guse to go outside the wilderness boundaries at Tahoma Creek, Summerland Trailhead area, and Carbon River road to repair roads. Revisions to the Wilderness Bill resulted in boundaries being set at 100 feet from the road, versus 200 feet. Sen. Dan Evans left some "wiggle room" in the bill, which we agreed to initially.

However, Bob feels alarmed at the extent to which they may wish to exercise that option on a large scale, and the speed at which they are choosing to act. Dale Crane remarked that superintendents do not like to be restricted by the provisions of the Wilderness Bill. Jon Soest commented that the Bill's provisions are in place and should not be circumvented. He offered to assist in locating boundaries for emergency repairs if necessary. Jim Baker insisted we should demand exact distances, and give no blank checks, and that the last paragraph of the NPS request is not feasible. Appurtenances to existing improvements have no bearing on the issue. Once in wilderness they are covered under the provisions. Norm Winn recommended that we stick to only the places cited, and not allow any others. Baker moved we inform MRNP that we cannot support the proposal as tendered. Any technical amendments must clearly state the boundary adjustments, and they must deal with specific areas. Motion passed. Dale Crane suggested that we need a quick response to our congressional delegation. President Pat Smith will draft a letter. Dale Crane offered to help in setting up a walking tour of the Highway 410 project in July with NPS. Norm Winn commented that we have excellent precedent for saving trees based on the Solduck Road issue in

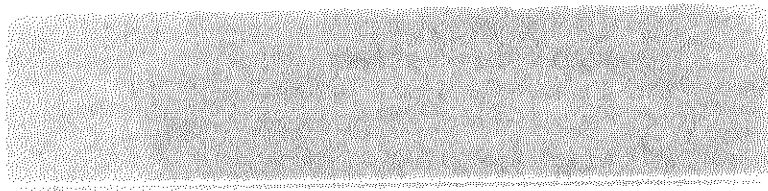
Olympic Park. Jim Baker stated we should meet with Superintendent Guse before writing to Congress, so we can justify getting no response from NPS. Pat Smith asked whether we are going to have a summer work party. Bob Aegerter described the plans. (See story elsewhere in this issue). Pat Smith announced that John Myatt resigned from the Board, feeling that MRNPA has not been sufficiently aggressive on auto emissions issues. Jim Baker asked that we demand a 90 day comment period on the 410 EA, and that we notify Tom Osborne of the Tacoma News Tribune, the P.I., and Times of the 410 project.

Roger Garrett



"Isn't this fun?"

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