

MRNPA**NEWS**

NEWSLETTER OF THE MOUNT RAINIER NATIONAL PARK ASSOCIATES

FROM THE SUMMIT...

On January 24, 1990, several MRNPA board members and friends had the opportunity to meet with Neal Guse, the park superintendent, and his staff, to discuss issues of interest to those involved with preserving and protecting Mt. Rainier National Park. Here are highlights of that meeting.

Mt. Rainier N.P. faces a drop in its budget from the operating funds distributed by the National Park Service. Funding for 1990 will drop to \$5,696,000 from \$5,760,000 in 1989. Many of you have supported the 1986 law to return "user fees" to the parks where they were collected. This money was to be in addition to the normal allocation. Because of the budget deficit, Congress allowed this to occur for only one year before the legislation was changed to help reduce the deficit. User fees are now being returned to the park as part of the normal budget process. However, while \$1.3 million in fees are collected at the park, substantially less is returned to the park.

Two projects that have been in the works are the expansion and updating of the National Park Inn at Longmire and the reopening of the West Side Road. As you are probably aware, the West Side Road was reopened this summer, but was again damaged by the river and is now closed again. Park staff have submitted a budget request to allow for repairs. There is better news regarding the Inn. The work is 80% completed and is

See From the Summit, p. 2)

OUTSIDE THE PARK BOUNDARY

Members of MRNPA are concerned about the environs of the Park, as well as the management of the Park itself by the National Park Service. On the east boundary, the Forest Service administers the William O. Douglas Wilderness. Management here is in strong contrast to the private ownership on most of the western boundary. Although the Forest Service has authorization for ownership of a strip three miles wide on the west side, the land is in private ownership. Some was traded, at the time of the creation of Mt. Rainier National Park, to railroad companies that had acquired checkerboard land grants prior to the creation of the Park. With the exception of Glacier View Wilderness, which is managed by the Forest Service, the timber companies have aggressively logged up to the Park boundary.

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MEET ROGER GARRETT

MT. RAINIER NEWS BRIEFS

NEWSLETTER COORDINATOR NEEDED

From the Summit, continued from p. 1)

tentatively scheduled for reopening around May 1.

The next one to two years will present us with many projects to review as well as an opportunity to provide the Park Service with input as to our preferred vision of the park.

The plans to improve/update the Sunrise area are on hold because of a disagreement with the State about historical preservation. The State wishes to retain the present lodge as an historical structure. Work here is still scheduled for 1992 if money is appropriated.

The ski dorm at Paradise that is used for staff housing is due for rehabilitation. An Environmental Impact Statement is due out in the next 6 weeks.

Highway 410, otherwise known as Mather Memorial Parkway, is proposed for upgrading. Work on the highway must be negotiated between the National Park Service, the Federal Highway Administration, two National Forests, and the State Department of Transportation. A draft environmental assessment is now being circulated among the agencies and its release to the public is anticipated soon.

The General Management Plan for the park is due to be rewritten beginning next year. The last master plan was written in 1974 and approved in 1984. The new plan will indicate changes proposed for specific areas and will not be as general as the last plan. This presents us with a unique opportunity to tell the Park Service what we want the park to be.

As you can see, the next year will be a busy one, with an opportunity for us to have a major impact on Mt. Rainier National Park. While we look forward to your continuing support as members of this organization, we also wish to have you work with us on any issues of concern to you.

If you wish to work on one of the issues addressed here or any others, please call me or any of the other board members. We need your insight and enthusiasm.

RENEW MEMBERSHIP TODAY

Boundaries continued from p. 1)

The Forest Service is presently considering trading land immediately outside the Park on the Mowich Lake Road to a private timber company. MRNPA has notified the Forest Service of our opposition to this trade and our concern about the clearcutting that would occur.

The White River Ranger District of the Forest Service manages the lands on the northern boundary of the Park. Many fine old growth groves on the Park boundary are now being offered for cutting. One is in Pigeon Creek, in the Huckleberry drainage. This would result in logging on the boundaries of both Mt. Rainier National Park and the Clearwater Wilderness.

Land management outside the Park has a direct impact on the long term viability of the Park's ecosystem. MRNPA takes an active interest in these management activities on the environs. If you would like more information or to become active, please contact Bob Aegerter, 9230 41st Ave. NE, Seattle, WA 98115-3802, (206) 527-4492.

MRNPA OFFICERS AND TRUSTEES EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

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Vice-Pres:	Jon Soest	206/863-3507
Secretary:	Roger Garrett	503/620-2533
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EDITORIAL STAFF

COORDINATOR: Margie Goulden

EDITOR: Ellen Ostern

TYPISTS: Peg Engel or Sally Soest

LAY-OUT: Van Perdue or Peg Engel

MAILING: Arlene Conde, Sally Soest

ARTICLES: Submitted by committee heads,
board members, and members-at-large

NEWS LETTER CO-ORDINATOR NEEDED

Immediately !

Job Description:

- * coordinate with Editor regarding time of publication and deadlines
- * arrange for typing and layout schedules with typist/layout volunteers (involves car travel)
- * take newsletter to printer; pick up
- * put address labels on newsletter (good time for beer and pizza party)
- * take newsletters to Tacoma post office (usually done by a Tacoma volunteer)
- * write short articles as needed
- * prepare miscellaneous information for typist/layout persons

Time Involved:

- * 10-12 hours 4 times/year (including phoning and driving)

Pay:

- * Volunteer pay, of course!

Benefits:

- * knowing that what you do makes a difference in our community/world
- * getting to know some really dedicated and involved people

Another Alternative:

- * One or two people could be in charge of all facets of the newsletter -- from editing to mailing. Coordinating with several volunteers can be time consuming, but it serves the purpose of getting more people involved.

Please Call Margie Goulden, 863-3265, for more information, or to volunteer to assume this position for the Spring Newsletter.

PLEASE !!!

EARTH DAY EVENT

Earth Fair 90 will be a celebration of 20 years of Earth Day. The celebration is scheduled for April 21-22 at Marymoor Park. MRNPA is a member of the Earth Fair Coalition organizing this event.

Watch for more in the Spring Newsletter. For more information, call 206-232-2982.

THE WEST SIDE STORY

The Setting

Mighty Mt. Rainier holds a glacial mass which covers nearly 57 sq. mi. of its volcanic complexion; it has more glaciers than any other single mountain in the coterminous United States. During the past 60 years, numerous floods have been reported from five glaciers on Mt. Rainier, most of which burst forth from Nisqually, Kautz, or South Tahoma Glaciers on the mountain's south flank. Glacial streams on Mt. Rainier erode through loose volcanic debris, and sudden increases in discharge such as those that occur in outburst floods commonly mobilize this eroded material as debris flows (Dreidger and Fountain, 1989). During recent years, specifically between 1985 and 1987, 60% of the outbursts reported produced debris flows, while 74% either damaged or destroyed Park facilities. The glacier ranked as the highest outburst flood producer is the South Tahoma Glacier.

The Study

Carolyn L. Dreidger, a glaciologist based at the U.S. Geological Survey's district office in Tacoma, has conducted extensive field work on glaciers in the western U.S. and Alaska since 1978, and has co-authored a recently completed U.S.G.S. professional paper entitled, "Glacier Outburst Floods At Mount Rainier."

Her study on Mt. Rainier began in 1987 as a monitoring program designed to measure the dimensions and timing of outburst floods. Monitoring instruments were set up along Kautz Creek and the Nisqually River, with a reference site on non-glacierized Paradise River. In 1987, no flooding occurred on the monitored streams, but four floods did burst forth from the unmonitored South Tahoma Glacier. On June 29 of that year, at least two Park visitors witnessed a flood wave accompanied by strong winds and boulders of up to nearly 13' in diameter that were hurled above the railings of the Wonderland Trail (suspension) bridge, which stands about 65' above the stream bed. See West Side, P. 4)

West Side, continued from p. 3)

Down-valley, picnic tables standing 4.3 miles down-stream of the glacier were buried by mud.

During the following year, the South Tahoma Glacier was indeed monitored -- in fact, U.S.G.S. instruments used to record passing floods on Tahoma Creek were washed away and destroyed by a glacier outburst on October 16, 1988. Compared to previous years, 1989 proved to be a relatively uneventful year in terms of S. Tahoma Glacier outburst activity. In cooperation with Chris Jonaitz-Trisler of the University of Washington's Geophysics Center, a seismometer was brought in and placed on Emerald Ridge during 1989 for the purpose of substantiating outburst activity from other forms of geologic activity. Seismograph readings last summer have led Dreidger to believe that outburst events do not occur due to seismic activity or the collapse of glacial seracs, for example. And in reference to her paper, Dreidger has theorized the existence of a bedrock bench beneath the S. Tahoma Glacier that may be susceptible to cavity development -- cavities that store water and then release it through hydraulic processes. Dreidger's outburst study is slated to continue until 1992.

The Solution

During a recent phone conversation, Park official Bon Dunnigan probably said it best when he said, "The Park does not think the same way that Mother Nature does." Dunnigan said that the Park is exploring ideas and new ways to deal with the recurring wash-outs of the West Side Road. An outburst flood last October has reduced the width of the road in three locations. Though some people would like to see the West Side Road completely closed, the Park is under a lot of pressure to keep the road open.

In another phone conversation, Chris Jonaitz-Trisler, of the U.W. Geophysics Center, suggested that a "series of seismometers" may be placed along Tahoma Creek to warn the Park of impending floods. At any rate, the U.S.G.S. study continues.

By Larry Carreau

THE INSIDE SCOOP

Membership as seen by John Titland, MRNPA Treasurer

As the Treasurer of MRNPA, I am responsible for keeping track of our organization's membership. I receive your dues payments, print the labels for your newsletters, and record the information and notes you write on your annual membership renewal forms.

At the January Board of Trustees meeting, I was asked to explain to our members a little about membership status and about how I am handling the renewal process.

Membership: MRNPA currently has approximately 225 members. Members live as far away as Florida and the Carolinas, but the majority of members live in the Puget Sound counties of Washington State.

In the short term, I would like our membership to expand to over 500, so if you have friends who are interested in the Park, hand them this newsletter and encourage them to join.

Members and Meetings: Members should be aware that they are welcome, and in fact are encouraged, to attend Board of Trustees meetings. These meetings are not the highly structured affairs that the name unfortunately implies. Rather, they are a friendly and open forum for discussion of matters, happenings, issues, etc., which affect both the Park and the lands surrounding the Park. All attendees of these meetings are encouraged to join these discussions, voice their concerns, propose new issues, and share their expertise. However, if a member wants to be allowed to vote on the issues presented, she/he must bite the bullet and get elected (translate: volunteer) to be a member of the Board of Trustees. If you cannot attend the Board meetings, but know of an issue that you feel MRNPA should address, please write a short letter or call one of the Board members to express your concerns.

Membership Renewals: On the upper right corner of your newsletter label you will find a three digit number indicating the date on which you last renewed your membership. The first See Scoop, p. 5)

Scoop, continued from p. 4)

two digits are the year, followed by one digit indicating the quarter. The policy stated in previous newsletters was that membership ran from April to March, but renewals received after January would be credited to the next year. That was really too confusing, so in the future I will consider the year to be January to December. Thus, if your last renewal was 894 or prior, it's time for you to renew now. And please do renew.

The membership form in your newsletter is the most convenient document for me to record your renewal, although I usually am able to crop with the other ingenious things that I have been sent. (I, too, wish the newsletter editors would place the membership form back to back with those parts of the newsletter that I don't want to keep, rather than those parts that I do. However, complaints like that may get you an invitation to help work on the newsletter!)

A few comments about filling out the membership form. If both you and your spouse, prospective spouse, significant other, roommate, etc., are interested in the Park and MRNPA, please renew with both names. This allows me to accurately estimate our real membership. Please include your home phone number. We seldom call members, but phone numbers are occasionally very useful.

Please review the "I am interested in helping" blocks on the bottom of the form. If you are interested, please check the appropriate blocks. However, don't be too helpful. My computer overloads when members check off more than about twelve. Right now the Board has groups looking at boundary studies and transportation (visitor impact), so names of members interested in helping in these areas will immediately be passed to those group leaders.

Mount Rainier National Park
Information

(206) 569-2211

There is one new block on the form to indicate willingness to attend Board Meetings. Checking that block will (I hope) get you a personal invitation to attend from a Board member who will introduce you to everyone at the meeting. (You never can tell where checking that block will lead!)

Donations:

Finally, there is a place on the form to indicate a donation to MRNPA, if you choose to make one. Donations are always appreciated because raising funds for voluntary organizations is never easy. Right now MRNPA is in good shape with about \$4,000 in the treasury. In 1989 the major expenditures were printing and mailing the newsletter so it was a pretty cheap year. In 1988, MRNPA paid the travel expenses to send 3 members to Washington, D.C., to testify before Congress concerning designation of the Wilderness Areas within the three National Parks in Washington State. These expenditures were partially covered by generous special donations from individual members, but we still drew down the treasury significantly. However, since then donations from members have played a major part in bringing the treasury back to its current level. As I said previously, donations are always appreciated and I believe well spent.

If you have any questions or comments concerning all or any of these ramblings, send them to me when you renew your membership. I read them all.

BANQUET FOR NEW SUPERINTENDENT

A dinner will be held at The Mountaineers in Seattle on February 24 at 6:00 p.m. to welcome the new Superintendent of Olympic National Park. Watch your mail for an invitation to this event.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Mt. Rainier National Park is still interested in studying water quality in the Park, but needs volunteers to pack in equipment (30-40 lbs.). Anyone who is interested should call the Park at 569-2211, ext. 294.

RAINSHADOWS

Prevailing winds and storms hit Mt. Rainier from the southwest. Sheltered by the bulk of the mountain, the northeast side receives less snow. This results in an earlier snowmelt, and one might assume a longer growing season. But the growing season in Sunrise meadows, without long snow slopes above them, both begins and ends a little earlier than at Paradise. After all the snow has melted, their soils dry out. Meadows at Sunrise contain mountain fescue (Festuca viride), a bunchgrass common on the eastern slope of the Cascades. Grasslike plants in Paradise meadows are mostly sedges: snowy sedge (Carex spectabilis) and others. Sedges are more common than grasses in wetter areas and may be recognized by their triangular stems rather than round ones.

At higher elevations such as Burroughs Mountain, the lighter snowpack results in a richer variety of flowers. These are alpine plants adapted to cope with freezing conditions, should these occur when they are not covered with snow. They are little handicapped by snowpacks covering them for much of the summer, such as may happen on the opposite side, above Panorama Point.

There also is a rainshadow in the northeast Olympics. Many unusual

plants grow there, some found nowhere else. This is one of the reasons why the prolific, introduced mountain goats are of such concern. In addition to the endemic plants, there are some which are found in the Rockies, but not in the Cascades -- a curious phenomenon. Idaho fescue takes the place of mountain fescue.

In the rainshadow of Mt. Adams sagebrush meets timberline alongside scrub whitebark pines. While looking for mountain goats, which are native there, we scared up half a dozen large blue grouse. What were forest birds doing in the sagebrush, and what were they doing at heights where one might expect ptarmigan? A multitude of crickets and grasshoppers to eat provided a possible answer. Lower down in subalpine meadows, some of the whitebark pines are very large. An unobstructed valley descending directly east could be a warm air corridor. The pines at Sunrise are rather small and lower on Rainier's slopes, as they cannot compete with the spruce/fir forest.

By Mary Fries

TRAIL MAINTENANCE TRAINING

Hiking the trails can be difficult, but rewarding. Maintaining the trails is even more difficult unless we can recruit volunteers...lots of volunteers. And trail work parties can be exceptionally rewarding.

Users of the forested and high alpine trails are encouraged to assume some responsibility in maintaining these trails. Perhaps this can be your chance to become involved. Sign up for the Trail Maintenance Training series offered by Volunteers for Outdoor Washington (VOW). And then offer to participate in a Trail Work Party.

Information for the 1990 annual MRNPA Work Party will be published in the Spring Newsletter.

Volunteers for Outdoor Washington will be conducting its annual Trail Maintenance Training series this spring. For a schedule and more information, call VOW at (206) 545-4868 or Suse at (206) 723-2988.

WILDLIFE HABITAT LEGISLATION

The Washington Wildlife and Recreation Coalition has developed state legislation to fund the acquisition of important wildlife habitat and outdoor recreation opportunities. The bills, now before the state legislature, are SB 6412 and HB 2568.

If you wish to support this legislation, you can do so via a toll-free message number, 1-800-562-6000, or by writing your state legislators:

Hon. (Senator's name)
Washington State Senate
Olympia, WA 98504

Hon. (Representative's name)
House of Representatives
Olympia, WA 98504

MEET ROGER GARRETT

Roger Garrett...

...MRNPA's Secretary since the inception of the organization in January 1985. Even before that time, Roger had been a grass roots activist in the preservation of Mt. Rainier National Park.

Roger lives in Oregon with his wife, Becky. Presently, he serves as the S.W. Regional Representative for the Washington State Timber, Fish, and Wildlife (TFW) Agreement. He diligently monitors forest practices on state and private lands for the Washington Environmental Council. Roger is also affiliated with many other environmental organizations, including the Alaska Conservation Foundation, Yellowstone Coalition, and Washington's own Olympic Park Associates and the North Cascades Conservation Council.

What brings Roger from Oregon to actively support a Washington-based organization like MRNPA? Perhaps his varied background holds the answer. For eleven years, after graduating from the University of Alaska, Roger gained expertise in working seasonally as a fire lookout, smokechaser, crew boss, truck driver, ranger, and station guard. Two of these summers were at Mt. Rainier National Park. And perhaps that is when his love for the Park's unique ecosystem and his dedication to the Park's uncertain future began.

For five years Roger has been "commuting" to the MRNPA Board meetings and the Executive Committee meetings. During that time he has met several times with the Superintendent of the Park and has monitored the management of the Park from the viewpoint of a concerned citizen, a cross-country skier, a hiker, backpacker, and climber. And for two and a half years, Roger coordinated all aspects of the newsletter -- editing, typing, layout, and mailing.

We appreciate Roger's contribution to MRNPA. He has helped us make a difference!

RENEW MEMBERSHIP TODAY

MRNPA NEWS BRIEFS

NEXT MRNPA BOARD MEETING

Date: Monday, 12 March 1990

Place: Andy's Tukwila Station
16200 W. Valley Hwy., Renton

Time: 6:30 dinner; 7:30 meeting

For more information: Call any Board member.

ANIMAL TRACKS

Beaver

Castor canadensis

Order: Rodentia

Family: Castoridae (beavers)

Range: throughout most of the Pacific Northwest including offshore islands

Habitat: near freshwater streams and ponds in forested country and adjoining areas

Size and Weight: 3 1/2 ft., 50 lbs.

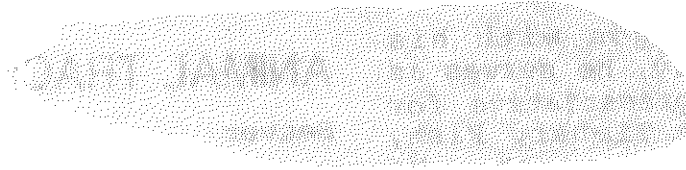
Diet: strictly vegetarian, including aquatic plants, bark, twigs, and leaves of many deciduous trees.

Sounds: non-vocal, but smacks tail on water when alarmed

This industrious, aquatic mammal is the largest North American rodent. Although it sometimes lives unobtrusively on river banks, signs of the beaver's presence are quite obvious. It must provide itself with water for survival, which usually entails gnawing down dozens of small, soft-wood trees and constructing a conspicuous dam system, often several hundred yards long, and a lodge. Beavers can grasp objects with their front paws, and stand and walk upright on their rear feet. They use their flat, scaly, strong tails for support. Gregarious animals, beavers work well together on their engineering projects. They are active year-around, but may operate unobserved beneath the ice during much of the winter.

Beavers sometimes obscure portions of their tracks by dragging their tails over them. Still, the large webbed hind feet almost always leave distinctive imprints, with six to eight inches between pairs of tracks. Source: Animal Tracks of the Pacific Northwest, by Karen Pandell and Chris Stall, Mountaineers, Seattle, 1981.

RENEW MEMBERSHIP TODAY



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