

THE WILD CASCADES

THE JOURNAL OF THE
NORTH CASCADES
CONSERVATION
COUNCIL

Winter 2022



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COVER: A *Gulo gulo*—aka a wolverine—as captured by the Cascade Wolverines Project at its winter camera-trapping station near Holden Village, February 2022. Learn more on page 9. DAVID MOSKOWITZ/CASCADES WOLVERINE PROJECT PHOTO

The Wild Cascades

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North Cascades Conservation Council
PO Box 95980, University Station, Seattle, WA 98145-2980

THE NORTH CASCADES

CONSERVATION COUNCIL was formed in 1957 “To protect and preserve the North Cascades’ scenic, scientific, recreational, educational, wildlife, and wilderness values.” Continuing this mission, N3C keeps government officials, environmental organizations, and the general public informed about issues affecting the Greater North Cascades Ecosystem. Action is pursued through administrative, legal, and public participation channels to protect the lands, waters, plants and wildlife.

Over the past half century N3C has led or participated in campaigns to create the North Cascades National Park Complex, Glacier Peak Wilderness, and other units of the National Wilderness System from the W.O. Douglas Wilderness north to the Alpine Lakes Wilderness, the Henry M. Jackson Wilderness, the Chelan-Sawtooth Wilderness, the Wild Sky Wilderness and others. Among its most dramatic victories has been working with British Columbia allies to block the raising of Ross Dam, which would have drowned Big Beaver Valley.

N3C is supported by member dues and private donations. These contributions support the full range of the Council’s activities, including publication of *The Wild Cascades*. As a 501(c)(3) organization, all contributions are fully tax deductible to the extent allowed by law. Membership dues for one year are: \$10 (Living Lightly) to \$100.

North Cascades
Conservation Council
P.O. Box 95980
University Station
Seattle, WA 98145-2980

N3C Website
www.northcascades.org



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Founded in 1957
SEATTLE, WASHINGTON

THE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

WINTER 2022

We sure have a lot of irons in the proverbial fire now! The potential for great improvements and for great calamities seems to ramp up each time we publish an issue of *The Wild Cascades* and pause to speak to our treasured members about the situations and our prospects. Winter is a good time to reflect and prepare, which is what I've been trying to do so that we start this year off with a prospect of some successes.

In fact, we may already have had a few of those successes, but of course the agencies will never tell us that in so many words, as in "Y'know, you're right, we shouldn't be doing that, and we'll either stop or scale that project way back." They just do those things and blame it on Mother Nature in the form of storm damage or fire. Other environmental organizations seem to be focused on "wins," while we doggedly pursue issues regardless of the prospects of winning, simply because they're the right thing to do. I guess that's why I'm so proud to be leading this organization. That's been our M.O. since N3C was formed, and there's no prospect of that changing, I'm happy to report. YOU OUR MEMBERS make that happen by being so loyal. Plus, we all care passionately. It's as simple as that! When I introduce our organization to new agency officials, I always emphasize the words all volunteer and say why that makes such a difference.

A huge opportunity has just presented itself as new Superintendent Don Striker takes the helm at North Cascades National Park. We've had an introductory meeting and agreed to meet monthly going forward. Please email me if you're interested in Park issues. We want to hear your concerns. Supt. Striker seems open to possibilities and is certainly a breath of fresh air. We have many topics to discuss with him, and your individual concerns as well as our long-standing ones are important. Please consider joining the discussion. Increasing member involvement has been one of my goals, and here's a golden opportunity, especially if you have an area within the Park that you especially treasure such as Stehekin or the Cascade Pass area.

As I hinted above, our efforts last year to stop the two big logging proposals on our National Forests seem to have had an effect: the Forest Service has announced that both the Twisp River and N. Fk. Nooksack projects have officially gone "back to the drawing board." At least for now. That could be a very good thing if they stay gone, but if they rear their ugly heads again we'll pick up right where we left off. The trend is currently in the right direction at least, and we have to remind ourselves that all the effort, publicity, and ground-truthing we've done matters. So, we keep the pressure on. To quote our late board member David Brower (who became a bit more famous as part of another organization*), "Politicians [and agency officials] are like weather vanes. Our job is to make the wind blow."

Phil Fenner

philf@northcascades.org

*see <http://www.northcascades.org/wordpress/david-brower>



N3C Actions

OCTOBER 2021 to
FEBRUARY 2022

*Advocacy carried out by
dedicated N3C volunteers
in the last five months to
protect and preserve North
Cascades lands, waters,
plants, and wildlife. Also
noted: issues under study
that will require action
when fully evaluated and
understood.*



DEFENDING WILD AREAS AGAINST DAMAGING INDUSTRIAL USES

Why it matters: resource extraction — mining, logging, hydropower — is the most harmful use of public land. N3C strives to save what remains wild, mitigate what's been lost, and restore what's been damaged.

- ☒ Continued participation in the FERC Relicensing for the Seattle City Light (SCL) Skagit Project Dams. We will attend the late March two-day meeting where SCL will present preliminary reports from all studies undertaken so far and take questions and comments prior to the April submission of the reports to FERC. These studies, some complete and some underway, are incredibly important in making informed determinations about measures to be taken in the new license in 2025 because the term of the license could be as long as 50 years. The page count is over 3000 pages. *See page 20.*
- ☒ Signed joint letter opposing SB 5632, a \$5 billion Water Infrastructure Program giving WA DOE unfettered authority to build dams without public involvement or comment.
- ☒ Signed joint letter commenting on proposed WA DOE Regional Haze Standards, which include little new cleanup of existing sources of haze. We advocate for clean air in national parks, that clean air at parks means healthier air for people where they live, and for the best pollution controls available without waiting another ten years.



ESTABLISHING, EXPANDING AND PROTECTING WILDERNESS AREAS

Why it matters: federal land designation as Wilderness and Park is the gold standard of ecosystem protection, precluding most damaging industrial and commercial exploitation.

- ☒ Submitted scoping comments to NOCA for the relocation of the Stehekin Road out of the flood plain at mile post 5.5. North Cascades National Park (NOCA) has issued a FONSI and a Record of Decision for this project. N3C is awaiting the Environmental Assessment (EA) of the actual routing and construction details. Construction is anticipated this summer. N3C will monitor for “mission creep” once heavy roadbuilding equipment is on the ground.
- ☒ Submitted comments to the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) opposing the U.S. Geological Survey proposal to use helicopters to install and service seismic monitoring stations in Glacier Peak Wilderness. Drafting joint objection letter with Wilderness Watch. *See page 18.*



PROMOTING ENVIRONMENTALLY SOUND RECREATION IN WILD AREAS

Why it matters: balancing access with economics and Wilderness preservation, we evaluate motorized use and places where it needs to be limited to reduce land impacts and recurring road repair costs.

- ✓ Met new NOCA Superintendent Don Striker for an encouraging and open discussion. We will have monthly meetings going forward.
- ✓ Held conference call with Bec Detrich, new North Cascades Institute ED, covering topics including Skagit Hydro project relicensing.
- ✓ Attended Washington Watershed Restoration Initiative (WWRI) Coalition virtual meeting. Agreed to a proposed Legacy Roads and Trails (LRT) /Infrastructure event for Rep. Schrier's office, and to draft and circulate an LRT support letter.



PROTECTING ANCIENT FORESTS AND PROMOTING RESPONSIBLE FOREST MANAGEMENT

Why it matters: like real estate, they're just not making ancient forest anymore. We seek to restore watersheds and fisheries damaged from decades of heavy logging and road building and protect significant forests from degradation.

- ✓ Attended virtual public meeting on revised Twisp "restoration" plans presented by Okanogan/Wenatchee National Forest (OWNF), which reduce acreage of affected areas by 2/3, excluding burned areas and mature forest but including old growth and road building in Inventoried Roadless Areas (IRA). N3C is considering its response. *See page 13.*
- ✓ Submitted comments supporting USFS's proposal to restore Roadless Rule Protections to the Tongass National Forest in Alaska.



PROTECTING WILDLIFE AND WILDLIFE HABITAT

Why it matters: From microscopic fungi to top predators, the wilderness ecosystem's living members are interdependent, so keeping viable populations of each species is essential to preserve the ecosystem for future generations.

- ✓ Continued monitoring, with the Darrington District Ranger, the Monte Cristo CERCLA track in Inventoried Roadless Area (IRA), to remain open through 2022 to allow access for monitoring (of superfund cleanup) not conducted in 2021 due to COVID restrictions.
- ✓ Signed joint letter to the Secretary of the Interior supporting reintroduction of grizzly bears to the North Cascades.

WATCH LIST: Potential issues requiring action

Marblemount quarry. DNR notified the applicant on Dec. 6 that they intended to make a Determination of Significance with requirement for a full EIS. In accordance with SEPA regulations that must be finalized within 90 days (March 6). At press time the applicant requested a 30-day extension which DNR granted, moving the finalization to April 5. *See page 8.*

Donut hole. A portion of the funding to buy out the mining rights in this unprotected land on the upper Skagit headwaters in B.C. comes from the governor's proposed budget. *See page 22.*

Nooksack Vegetation Management Plan. Withdrawn and being revised.

Eight Mile dam and reservoir. The DEIS on repair and raising this dam and reservoir in the Alpine Lakes Wilderness is due this spring.

Twisp Restoration Project. Project scaled back with some key actions withdrawn. *See page 13.*

Want to take actions that protect the North Cascades?

Join the N3C board.

Contact Phil Fenner for details at
philf@northcascades.org



Join first-ever N3C class at NCI

N3C board members Carolyn McConnell and Dave Fluharty and president Phil Fenner will offer “Wilderness Alps: Conservation in the North Cascades—and What’s Left to Do” at the North Cascades Institute on Zoom May 11 at 5:30 pm. They’ll review how the Glacier Peak

Wilderness and the North Cascades National Park came to be, how N3C members were crucial in these successes, and how participants can get involved in continuing to protect the lands we love. If you can’t make it on the 11th, register and get a link to a recording you can view any time.

Register and learn more at

<https://ncascades.org/signup/programs/how-the-cascades-were-saved-and-whats-left-to-do>

POLLY DYER

The American Alps were in peril. One of the world's largest mining companies had designs on the jagged wilderness known as the North Cascades.

A band of conservationists, including the cheerfully tenacious Polly Dyer, had other ideas. With help from U.S. Senator Henry M. “Scoop” Jackson, they won protection for the serrated peaks and pristine lakes.

On Oct. 2, 1968, amid the war protests and assassinations that shook the world, came a bright spot: President Johnson created North Cascades National Park. “Polly was the best prepared person I think I’ve ever run across on issues,” says former governor Dan Evans.

Dyer’s sweeping 50-year legacy ranges from adding Shi Shi Beach to the Olympic National Park to supplying key language to the federal Wilderness Act. She died in 2016 at 96, but her work lives on. Untrammelled nature, she told a U.S. Senate Committee, “is a priceless asset which all the dollars man can accumulate will not buy back.”

Main photo: Although not one of the few women conservationists in the 1950s, Polly Dyer said it didn't occur to her the first time. Photo courtesy of the Seattle Times.

Left: Dyer (far right) organized a 22-mile hike led by U.S. Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas (center) to protect a stretch of the Olympic National Park. The Seattle Times.

Center: Polly and her husband, Arthur Dyer, worked together 63 years, until his death in 2005. Dyer Collection.

Right: The North Cascades and its adjacent serrated peaks have been called the American Alps. Photo courtesy of the Seattle Times.

Exhibit highlights Polly Dyer

“Cheerfully tenacious” Polly Dyer is featured in “1968: The Year That Rocked Washington” on display at the [Skagit County Historical Museum](#) in La Conner, Wash. until May 8. On loan from the Office of the Secretary of State, the exhibit looks at this seminal year and its impact on Washington State through the stories of remarkable people who lived through it. Thanks to N3C, Harvey Manning’s *The Wilderness Alps* is on sale in the museum lobby. “It’s an honor to be placed right next to Harvey Manning!” said Evergreen professor Ted Whitesell, whose students’ work *Defending Wild Washington* is also on sale.

Chuck Sams is new NPS director

New National Park Service director Charles “Chuck” Sams III is the first Indigenous leader in the agency’s 105-year history—and the first full-time director since 2017.

He is Cayuse and Walla Walla, with blood ties to the Yankton Sioux and Copah Peoples.

Although he has no prior experience working for NPS, Sams has spent years working in natural resource and conservation management and most recently sat on the Pacific Northwest Power and Conservation Council. He also served in the U.S. Navy as an intelligence specialist. Previously executive director of the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, he has also worked as an adjunct profes-

sor at both Georgetown University and Whitman College, where he taught about treaties between sovereign governments.

Tribal leaders appreciate Sams’ experience working with tribal governments, treaty rights and sovereignty, especially as they work with NPS on cultural, environmental, conservation and other matters of mutual importance to the U.S. and Indian Country.

“Our national parks are part of the ‘forever business’ but are under enormous threat today, from the climate crisis to crumbling infrastructure, internal staffing issues to overcrowding. Shaping a better future for our 423 national parks, which protect wild nature and share our country’s rich and diverse history and cultures, requires a strong leader,” said Theresa

Pierno, president and CEO of the National Parks Conservation Association.

“My recent conversations with Chuck and knowledge of his tribal government and deep, community-inspired leadership roles confirmed that he is capable and ready to take on this responsibility.”

During his confirmation hearing, Sams told the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee that raising employee morale across a workforce that stretches from American Samoa to the Caribbean would be his top priority.

“The National Park Service is a very special agency with a timeless mission: to preserve resources and to inspire current and future generations. I am excited to lead that mission.”

DNR blinks on two Whatcom County timber sales

This sort of thing doesn’t happen often, but the Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR) recently withdrew its permit for the Upper Rutsatz timber sale, located atop the Van Zandt Dike geographic feature near the confluence of the North Fork and Middle Fork of the Nooksack River. The natural, unplanted, 90-acre forest of Upper Rutsatz, featuring ample structural diversity and large trees, well exceeds a century in age. It is exactly the type of publicly owned forest that has no business being logged. We can thank public pressure, coordinated by the excellent work of the Center for Responsible Forestry (CRF) out of Tacoma, for this outcome.

CRF has also assembled an impressive campaign to save a similar 166-acre block of state forestland above Lake Whatcom, which is threatened by DNR’s Bessie timber sale. CRF and local allies successfully persuaded the Whatcom County Council to recently come out in opposition to Bessie, although the Bellingham City Council lamely opted not to. DNR still has May 25th on its calendar to auction off this sale, but one senses the dynamic is beginning to shift on our state forests. DNR is revisiting its policy for older forest stands, two former Lands Commissioners have proposed that westside state forests be managed as ecological reserves, and the Superintendent of Public Instruction has voiced skepticism regarding DNR’s longstanding “clearcuts for kids” management philosophy.

TWC readers are heartily encouraged to visit www.c4rf.org to learn more about and get involved with this important activism taking place across state forestlands in western Washington.



No word from DNR on Marblemount SEPA

By Jose Vila

As you wind your way east up the North Cascades Highway along the Wild and Scenic Skagit River to enjoy an outdoor adventure in some of the finest mountain country in North America, a relaxing river float on the Upper Skagit full of eagle and other wildlife watching, or an amazing drive across one of the most spectacular and scenic high mountain passes, you will eventually find yourself in Marblemount, the Entrance to the American Alps.

When you see this old wood sign you will know you are at the gateway to your adventure. But you may not realize that directly across the river from this sign is a sheer rock face called Big Bear Mountain that rises almost 900 feet above the river valley. Three times since 2019, this rock face has been proposed, without adequate environmental impact studies, for decades of heavy industrial jetty stone mining operations with blasting and elevated mining work that would significantly impact this scenic, environmental, and culturally important area and forever degrade a place we value so much.

The first mine proposal handled by Skagit County resulted in a SEPA-intended Determination of Significance (DS) but was not pursued because the applicant



(Kiewit Infrastructure) decided they did not want to go forward with the required Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

The second proposal handled by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) resulted in a SEPA-intended Determination of Non Significance (DNS) which was eventually withdrawn by DNR due to lack of adequate study when the public reminded them that, just as with the Kiewit proposal, the second proposal lacked adequate study.

The third proposal, handled once more by DNR, was discovered by us before DNR made its initial determination. As soon as the new documents were made public,

the many interested individuals and groups reminded DNR of all the known missing studies of likely significant impacts identified in the two previous proposals.

On December 6, 2021, DNR said they had completed their review of the mining application documents and made an intended Determination of Significance with requirement for an EIS. DNR informed us that, in accordance with SEPA regulations, the applicant had 90 days to decide whether to go forward with the EIS or not.

An independently produced full-scope EIS is needed to evaluate all the potential significant impacts that would result from this proposed industrial mining operation at the confluence of the Wild and Scenic Skagit and Cascade Rivers at the entrance to the North Cascades. We have not received any updates from DNR since early December. The 90-day period to finalize the SEPA determination expires on March 6.

N3C member Jose Vila is co-founder of Skagit River Alliance, skagitriveralliance.org



Robinson Pass. —ROBERT KENDALL PHOTO

Read back issues of *National Park Magazine* online

Through a new archive you can enjoy almost every back issue of National Parks Magazine from 1942 to the present. Just visit npshistory.com/npca/magazine for your copies. Thank the National Park Service History Electronic Library, the portal to electronic publications covering the history of the National Park Service (NPS) and the cultural and natural history of the national parks, monuments, and historic sites of the U.S. National Park System.

20 more years without mining at Holden

The Rio Tinto Mining Company, which paid for a five-year, \$200 million remediation of the Holden Mine in Chelan County, still holds mining rights to the area—but they are “withdrawn” every 20 years thanks to the support of the U.S. Forest Service and other agencies.

This is the year when the previous withdrawal expires and a new one is drawn up. A Notice of Application for Withdrawal Extension and Opportunity for Public Meeting for the Holden Mine Reclamation Project, Washington was published in the Federal Register, on October 27, 2021 and also in the Wenatchee World. Comments were due January 25, 2022 to the Bureau of Land Management Oregon/Washington Director in Portland.

PLO No. 7533 withdrew 1,265 acres of National Forest System lands in the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest from location and entry under the United States mining laws for a period of 20 years to protect the Holden Mine Reclamation Site, where the USFS has remediated for release of hazardous substances under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act, including undertaking infrastructure improvements and capital investments in Chelan County, Washington. This notice advises the public of an opportunity to comment on the USFS application for the extension of the existing withdrawal for an additional 20 years and to request a



public meeting. This notice also corrects the legal land description and acreage figure (from 1,265 acres to 1,285 acres) stated in PLO No. 7533. Unless extended, the withdrawal established by PLO 7553 will expire on August 5, 2022.

The USFS supports extending the withdrawal and gathered all comments received for this notification. No opposition was expected.

Looking east over the Holden Mine tailings during the remediation paid for by Rio Tinto. In this July 17, 2014 photo, you can see smoke rising from the Methow Valley on the day the massive Carlton Complex fire erupted. —MARY KOCH PHOTO



Help collect wolverine tracks

*The intrepid *Gulo gulo* is notoriously difficult to study due to the remote and rugged terrain they inhabit. Blending skills from science, alpine recreation, conservation, and storytelling, the Cascades Wolverine Project team (cascadeswolverineproject.org) spends winters monitoring wolverines from camera-trapping stations throughout the North Cascades. By contributing to ongoing monitoring and conservation, the Methow Valley-based team hopes to ensure that wolverines recover and persist in the Pacific Northwest. If you see wolverine tracks when you're snowshoeing or cross country skiing, please contribute to their community science project. Photos and coordinates are helpful but optional. Submit them to:*

cascadeswolverineproject.org/wolverine-tracks/

Size comparison of human hand with wolverine track. —DAVID MOSKOWITZ/CASCADES WOLVERINE PROJECT PHOTO

Nooksack logging update

By Jim Scarborough



Confluence of Canyon Creek and the North Fork Nooksack River, below the site of deep-seated landslides resulting in property loss and great public/private expense.

—JIM SCARBOROUGH PHOTO

Just in time for Thanksgiving, the U.S. Forest Service withdrew its draft decision notice and final environmental assessment for the North Fork Nooksack Vegetation Management Project (NVMP). Forest Supervisor Jody Weil wrote to interested parties that following a major pineapple express weather system which damaged approximately 30% of the road system within the project area, further assessment was necessary due to changed conditions prior to implementation. Supervisor Weil later wrote to clarify that rumors of the NVMP's demise were greatly exaggerated, and that it would return to terrorize the public at some future date.

Readers of *The Wild Cascades* will recall that the NVMP has targeted just shy of 3,000 acres in the shadow of Mount Baker for commercial thinning and clearcutting, with up to 20 miles of road (re)construction for log haul purposes. N3C and a few other entities, including the Nooksack Tribe, Lummi Nation (reportedly), and Sierra Club, separately filed formal objections to the Forest Service in opposition to various aspects of the NVMP. However, with Supervisor Weil's withdrawal of the draft decision notice and final environ-

mental assessment, all objections subsequently became moot and will need to be resubmitted when the Forest Service opts to bring Frankenstein's monster back to life.

A sordid side story of the NVMP has involved the actions of Seattle-based Conservation Northwest and Bellingham-based RE Sources, in their unwitting or conscious enabling of the Forest Service to pursue this reckless change of management direction in the upper Nooksack basin, as described in *TWC* fall 2021. That same *TWC* article was reprinted in January's issue of *Whatcom Watch*. Conservation Northwest took umbrage at our criticism and so was offered space for a rebuttal in the pages of *TWC*. This was initially declined, though *Whatcom Watch*'s invitation for a rebuttal was later accepted and published. Conservation Northwest subsequently offered their *Whatcom Watch* rebuttal, penned by executive director Mitch Friedman, for reprinting in this issue of *TWC*.

After some discussion, Conservation Northwest's request to reprint Mr. Friedman's rebuttal in *TWC* was rejected, because it strayed from the issues at hand

and into ad hominem attacks on N3C's character. Mr. Friedman resorts to overt ageism in his attempt to marginalize N3C's relevance (with no trace of irony, given that Mr. Friedman is this writer's senior by a half-dozen years or so) and essentially accuses N3C of collective dementia. Nonetheless, N3C did agree to at least report on Mr. Friedman's more substantive points. See page 11.

N3C will stay alert for the Forest Service's expected reissuance of its decision notice for the NVMP, at which point we anticipate filing a new objection, absent very significant changes to this project. We are hopeful, as well, that the Nooksack Tribe and Lummi Nation will engage the Forest Service on a meaningful government-to-government basis, with a goal of reducing what may otherwise prove to be irreparable damage to the Nooksack watershed. Frankly, given the dire state of our biosphere's health, it would likely be of considerable benefit if every significant federal or state action involving natural systems first required a local tribal co-signatory.

CNW's non-denial denial

N3C feels obligated to report and respond to Conservation Northwest E.D. Mitch Friedman's rebuttal in *Whatcom Watch*, following that publication's acceptance of our fall '21 *TWC* article, which criticized Conservation Northwest's actions during the North Fork Nooksack Vegetation Management Project's (NVMP) window of public involvement. Regrettably, Mr. Friedman's decision to pepper his rebuttal with personal attacks precluded its appearance in this issue of *TWC*. Its full text may still be found at whatcomwatch.org for those so inclined. N3C continues to welcome a more dignified correspondence with Conservation Northwest that acknowledges the seriousness of this moment on the Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest.

In his rebuttal, Mr. Friedman calls the NVMP a "mess," which is certainly something that most of us can agree with, then goes on to describe the ecological concerns that N3C has been highlighting since this project's initial scoping period. Mr. Friedman makes a point to emphasize that Conservation Northwest also filed an objection to the NVMP, though theirs was submitted on the last day of the objection window—after it became clear that any ostensibly green organization involved would want to create some daylight between itself and this Forest Service fiasco, and also well after *TWC* Fall 2021 had gone to print.

Thereafter, Mr. Friedman pivots to assert that, despite the NVMP being fully representative of the Forest Service's timber program elsewhere in the Pacific Northwest, the agency somehow remains "capable of doing good restoration." Perhaps, just as China may be capable of democratic governance, but evidence is sorely lacking from the dozens of thinning units that N3C has walked. Mr. Friedman points to the Snoquerra project near Mount Rainier as a happy exception. Yet whereas Snoquerra includes aquatic habitat enhancements such as road decommissioning and improved fish passage, it still involves the same old commercial thinning regime with engineered quasi-forest, degraded water quality from log haul roads, soil compaction and erosion, noxious weed spread, suffocating carpets of regenerated hemlock seedlings, and open invitation to all manner of human abuses via new travel and yarding corridors, not to mention the

carbon emissions that inevitably accompany logging.

Mr. Friedman proceeds to tout the Nooksack Access and Travel Management Plan (ATM) and how Conservation Northwest will advocate for federal infrastructure dollars in order to realize this document's "aquatic restoration opportunities." What he elides, though, is that the Nooksack ATM process was an unfunny joke, whereby the Forest Service discovered that every road, no matter how decrepit, has its own constituency; then abandoned any pretense of leadership by largely maintaining the oversized road network's sorry status quo in perpetuity. Federal funds are hardly necessary to implement the blink-and-you'll-miss-'em goals of the Nooksack ATM — a couple of bake sales in downtown Everett during lunch hour would probably suffice to cover the Forest Service's costs.

Mr. Friedman then detours to opine that N3C should be dispensed with because it is not among the "sane groups" doing the important work. He states that N3C "nearly blew" the process that resulted in creation of the 1600-acre Harriet Spangle Forest atop Blanchard Mountain in Skagit County. However, Mr. Friedman omits the larger context, in that N3C fought hard to protect the entirety (approximately four thousand acres) of the state forest block on Blanchard Mountain. Conservation Northwest, by contrast, settled into its trademark split-the-baby approach to negotiation and, in the end, carried the day. One may now witness the new clearcuts along the lower slopes of Blanchard that N3C tried to prevent.

Mr. Friedman's companion argument that N3C was uninvolved in the successful reconveyance of state forest acreage to county parkland above Lake Whatcom is true, though all-volunteer groups of course cannot be everywhere at once. Unlike Mr. Friedman and his large staff, we don't get paid for our work. (As it turns out, though, one N3C board member was directly engaged in this process.) Forever a believer in the healing power of the chainsaw, Conservation Northwest pushed for a commercial thinning plan in this watershed of a hundred thousand people, an ill-advised maneuver which to date has been wisely disregarded by Whatcom County Parks administration.

Mr. Friedman concludes his rebuttal in

Whatcom Watch by mentioning some of Conservation Northwest's successes (such as wildlife passage at major highways which, among some other achievements, N3C has complimented them for) and their dogged adherence to collaboration with all types of interests, up to and including extractive industries. He makes room for one more swipe at N3C, accusing us of "bitter polarization" and "backbiting," apparently conflating our steadfast and uncompromising defense of wild nature with someone starting a fistfight at a staid garden party.

Unfortunately, at no point does Mr. Friedman respond to our charges that the Forest Service played Conservation Northwest like a cheap guitar during the NVMP process, or that Conservation Northwest did in fact direct its membership to officially comment in support of one of the NVMP's two action alternatives, both of which involved extensive logging.



New year—new brochure!

Coming soon, the new N3C brochure will fit in a standard brochure rack and has a panel for a mailing address. Updated, and with new photos, it will be useful for your new member recruiting. We can send you some, just email nccinfo@northcascades.org

Corvid's eye

The inclusive “we” needs some help, and fast. Make that a lot of help. But as we’ve observed repeatedly in recent years, a federal agency that’s among the best-situated to mitigate the fraying of our ecological and societal systems apparently has the least institutional interest to do so. Climate destabilization and the corresponding collapse of biodiversity are incrementally taking human communities down with them, noticeably accelerating with each new phase of decline. It further goes without saying that the quality and quantity of our water, the very substance of life, is inextricably caught up in the same nosedive.

Human history has no shortage of examples of regional ecosystems degrading to the point that civilization itself regresses beyond what is likely a point of no return, like much of the Middle East. These days, however, there’s no place remote enough to escape this unnerving trend, no productive virgin territory over the next ridge that we can settle to make a new start. Unless one has that peculiar mix of great wealth and eccentricity to realistically consider sharing a deluxe apartment with Elon Musk and a few others of extreme self-regard on the surface of Mars (itself an oxygen-deprived wasteland), there is only the sadly diminishing here.

Give society this much: although we may be falling woefully short in making the necessary course corrections to save not only the biosphere, but also our own hides, we have at least begun to identify viable strategies that might allow us to circumvent certain global catastrophe in favor of merely transitioning to a decidedly leaner, probably harsher, but still livable world. Obstacles to intelligently implementing such actions are many, but a particularly frustrating hindrance is the reflexive tendency of locals to either view their own habits as too wholesome to cause any real damage, or new measures within their control as too small-scale to make a difference. Problems and solutions alike are almost always perceived as being someplace far away.

Here in the Pacific Northwest, one would be hard-pressed to find anyone who stays abreast of current events who would express indifference over accelerating deforestation in the Amazon basin and its horrific implications. But press them further on the potential and need for allowing public forests of the Cascades and Olympics to be spared from the chainsaw

in order to sequester carbon and conserve water, then expect caveats to pop up like dandelions in April. Politicians and capitalists will wax philosophical about our “way of life” and fabled families reliant upon timber dollars (now mostly replaced by feller bunchers), while let’s-make-a-deal green groups posing in hard hats laud the self-serving myth of “restoration forestry.”

In 2019, researchers at Oregon State University published a five-year, peer-reviewed, USDA-funded study in the pages of *Ecological Applications* which concluded that eliminating logging in identified forests along the Pacific coast, in the Cascades, and in wetter pockets of the northern Rocky Mountains would be the carbon dioxide equivalent of halting eight years’ worth of fossil fuel burning in the western lower 48 states. A substantial portion of this critical acreage overlaps our National Forests, which brings us back to a certain federal agency that seemingly cannot break its addiction to logging, even when doing so will directly aid the rescue of civilization itself: the U.S. Forest Service.

Past and current issues of *The Wild Cascades* have reported at length on the atrocious logging projects proposed and carried out by the Forest Service thus far this century, fortified by their talent for euphemism (eco-forestry, anyone?) and an array of cheerleaders—industry and NGOs alike—who benefit in some way from the present state of affairs. Yet any objective assessment quickly arrives at the conclusion that production of sawlogs is among the lowest of priorities for our irreplaceable National Forests. Contemporary society is in plain and desperate need of functioning carbon sinks, high-quality and reliable water, sensitive wildlife habitat, and outdoor recreation opportunities compatible with the first three concerns.

The Mount Baker-Snoqualmie (MBS) National Forest’s nearly 2700 square miles, right next door to our state’s main population center, can ably provide for all of these modern needs if the public has the wherewithal and courage to demand it.



Each “restoration forestry” project trotted out by the Forest Service, which is simply more logging with the thinnest green varnish applied, directly undermines the small-yet-essential contributions that our region can make to both our own well-being and that of the Earth as a whole. Eliminating commercial logging on the MBS would be a bold statement and a model of assuming local responsibility for one piece of the big puzzle.

This is hardly an unprecedented proposition. Within the corvid’s memory, administrators of the MBS floated the idea of ending their timber program entirely. This was before the threats of climate destabilization and clean water scarcity had fully crystallized here, and also prior to the ugly era of rash behavior from which many of us are now trying to exit. This proposition is also in line with recommendations from former Commissioners of Public Lands Jennifer Belcher and Peter Goldmark, for comparable management emphases on our westside state forests. It’s the antithesis of radicalism, and instead a classic outbreak of the lucidity of self-preservation.

Look not to today’s Forest Service for this necessity to come to pass, or to equivocating politicians, or to staffed organizations with a front-row seat at the federal trough unless they first sniff some opportunity. It will come about instead through endless pressure, endlessly applied, as so well elucidated by our own Brock Evans. It will come about by ceaselessly demanding an end to logging on the MBS – to instead allow this vast forest to sequester CO₂, conserve our water, provide for our depleted wildlife, and offer a place of spiritual and physical redemption for harried souls. It will happen when we drag the Forest Service and our politicians by their figurative lapels to where they must be. Waste not thy day.

The continuing (de-)evolution of the proposed Twisp Restoration Project

By Ric Bailey

The raucous roller coaster that is the Twisp Restoration Project (TRP), once a 77,000-acre “landscape level” logging project that encompassed practically all of the Twisp River Watershed, has taken an unusual turn.

On January 26, 2022, the Forest Service, Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest, announced it has reduced the project from the original 77,000 acres down to 24,000 acres. Good news?

The agency cites the Cedar Creek Wildfire of 2021, which burned around 10,000 acres of the TRP project area, as the reason for the size reduction. North Cascades Conservation Council is heartened, but curious as to why the 53,000-acre reduction due to a 10,000-acre wildfire.

Revealingly, during its teleconference presentation, the Forest Service off-handedly disclosed that it had removed all the spotted owl Late Successional Reserves from the logging project. N3C had expressed serious concerns over logging these federally-designated ancient forest reserves, so it appears our vigilance paid off.

However, there remain a number of unresolved issues, which N3C is taking up with our attorneys Liam Sherlock and Esack Grueskin. Conjoined with the impending ecological impacts of the project, the two primary legal issues are: (1) violation of the National Environmental Policy Act by the Forest Service, and (2) the favoritism shown by the agency to the North Central Washington Forest Health Collaborative (NCWFHC) in the preparation and implementation of the project.

The Forest Service’s final decision is expected spring 2022, with logging projected to begin this fall.

Even though the TRP has been reduced in size, the plan would still log 24,000 acres—including trees up to 25 inches diameter—and incise three miles of new road. There remain impending impacts to everything from pine marten and pileated woodpecker habitat, to sedimentation that could impact the endangered salmon and bull trout that inhabit the Twisp River.

The Forest Service plan will pay the timber sale contractors with trees. This will create an incentive to log the larger, more



One of many stumps left behind by a fire crew last summer cutting large trees in what they claim was a fuel-break operation along the (formerly) scenic Twisp River road, now damaged for many years to come.

—PHIL FENNER
PHOTO

fire-resistant trees that provide the best habitat and represent future old growth. Additionally, a provision in the plan called “Conditions-Based Management” will allow the contractors to remove trees not officially designated for cutting.

The focal point of N3C’s legal concerns is that the Environmental Analysis for the project includes only a single Alternative: the Forest Service’s preferred plan. Under NEPA, the Forest Service is directed to prepare a suite of alternatives to address specific “Needs,” in this case the agency’s unjustified insistence that naturally wet, intermittently dense forests constitute a fire hazard.

Beyond legal process, N3C contends that the project will not significantly influence the intensity of a wildfire that could threaten the ecosystem or downriver private property. The prospect of logging to reduce wildfire danger remains an unproven concept, as the science on the issue has not revealed decisive results from past fuels reduction logging projects.

There remains a serious problem with the Forest Service’s special relationship with the NCWFHC, composed of 23 interest groups ranging from county government to timber industry lobby groups, and limited conservation interests. Last December, the Forest Service revealed the new, reduced-acreage plan to the Collaborative in a special meeting, and received its comments on the changes.

But when N3C discovered the insider meeting, we asked Methow Valley District Ranger Chris Furr to publicly release the new information the Collaborative was given, and to re-open the public comment period. We were turned down.

There are strong indications that the Forest Service engaged the NCWFHC in the development of the TRP prior to any public notice of the existence of the project. We have submitted a request under the Freedom of Information Act, and are investigating whether these exclusive meetings constitute a violation of the Administrative Procedures Act or the Federal Advisory Committee Act.

Our concerns over the Twisp logging show are not limited to the threats to important habitats and fair process. The Forest Service’s plan involves four timber sales to be logged over a 20-year period. The Twisp Corridor, surrounded on both sides by the Chelan-Sawtooth Wilderness Area, has only ever been used as a recreation portal with eight wilderness trailheads and six campgrounds.

Twenty years of logging operations could render the area practically unusable to the people who revere this unique and incredible ponderosa pine forest.

Decline and fall of backpacking

An undiluted time capsule from 1975

Introducing Harvey Manning's unpublished *Decline and Fall of Backpacking*

From an unpublished manuscript, courtesy of Paul Manning

By Robert Kendall

Harvey Manning was the reason for my initial interest in North Cascades Conservation Council, years ago. His writings elucidated my own thoughts about conservation almost exactly, except that he was doing something about it. I was smitten with his obvious unwillingness to compromise. I felt less alone.

Decline and Fall of Backpacking is the craziest mix of profound and absurd I've ever seen in one place. Harvey sprinkles pure fiction into a framework of deep truth. Edgy satire was obvious but tall tales come without warning; I was hoodwinked into researching several vignettes. Particularly embarrassing was the notorious Lorette Sharpless, murdered guidebook author (see chapter X at the link below). Her fabrication is obvious in hindsight but fooled me for long enough.

This manuscript is an undiluted time capsule from 1975. It's forecast for the "bleak America of the year 2000" and beyond is captivatingly both nutty and brilliant. Energy issues are discussed at length, and climate change is mentioned once... in a strange way. A prediction about Mt. St. Helens is not to be missed.

Decline brings to light numerous seldom-mentioned elephants in the room of backpacking. It seemed borderline irresponsible to pull people's chains

while making such serious points, using "questionable" humor, and irony about guidebook authors. However, upon reflection I think this piece is genius for the way it provokes tickling afterthought.

Here is the Foreword of Manning's manuscript. Watch for excerpts in future issues of The Wild Cascades or, if you can't wait, read the whole thing on our website, www.northcascades.org/Manning/Decline_Fall_Backpacking.pdf



The Wild Cascades, Spring 1988

FOREWORD

To declare that in the very flowering of backpacking, a sport of mounting popularity for half a century and since the 1960s taking on trappings of an organized religion, can be seen the decay, invites incredulity, scorn, and hatred.

Yet one is reminded (and thus the title of this book) that a world without a Roman Empire once was so unimaginable that its disappearance was not so

much as suspected for centuries after the fact -- and in a sense remains to this day to be accepted by the Pope.

Also, few guessed at midcentury, as the cities and transportation system of America were being rebuilt, indeed the entire fabric of the economy and society rewoven around the automobile, that -- as we now recognize -- the family car would not outlast the century. Or for a parallel in recreation, rare was the voice in the 1950s predicting that the skiing "way of life," the Heroic Age of the "beautiful people," would prove to be a bubble bursting -- as it is in the process of doing -- in the 1970s.

The high priests of perfervid backpackers assuredly will attack my thesis as a damnable heresy and me personally as the desecrator of a temple. As consumed by the certainty of their revelation as any Pentecostal, and as determined to save the heathen from hellfire, those they cannot convert they will crucify. The greater will be their fury for viewing me, the author of a backpacking manual, as an apostate.

The punishment must be risked. First, because simple humanity demands that theangers of

backpacking, hushed up by a Watergate-like conspiracy of vested interests, be warned against -- just as someone should have warned skiers in the 1950s that the price for exhilaration in youth would be, as they are now learning in middle age, the rainy-day aches, and hobbling pace of imperfectly-mended bones and the prematurely-wrinkled skin and dim eyesight of too much bright sun. And just as someone should have warned America in the 1920s that in exchange for the great automobile romp the nation ultimately would have to suffer plundering by the "energy companies," blackmail by Arabs, and economic and political collapse. And just as someone should have warned B.C. Italians that if they didn't stamp out the aggressive village on the Tiber the A.D. taxes would go out of sight.

A second reason I must speak is a not disloyal desire that through foreknowledge we backpackers better compose ourselves to embrace inevitable disaster with dignity and not be dragged whimpering and whining to the gibbet.

Let it not be supposed I chortle over the fall of backpacking, as Gibbon did over that of Rome, or dry-wash hands in morbid anticipation as Spengler did over the Gotterdammerung of Faustian Man. I speak not in vindictive loathing but disappointed love, not glee but gloom. Backpacking is not totally iniquitous, no



The Wild Cascades, Spring 1988

more than Rome or skiing, and certainly less noxious than most of what's going on in America. That it must, at least in its present form, die, does not give me joy.

But die it must. And will.

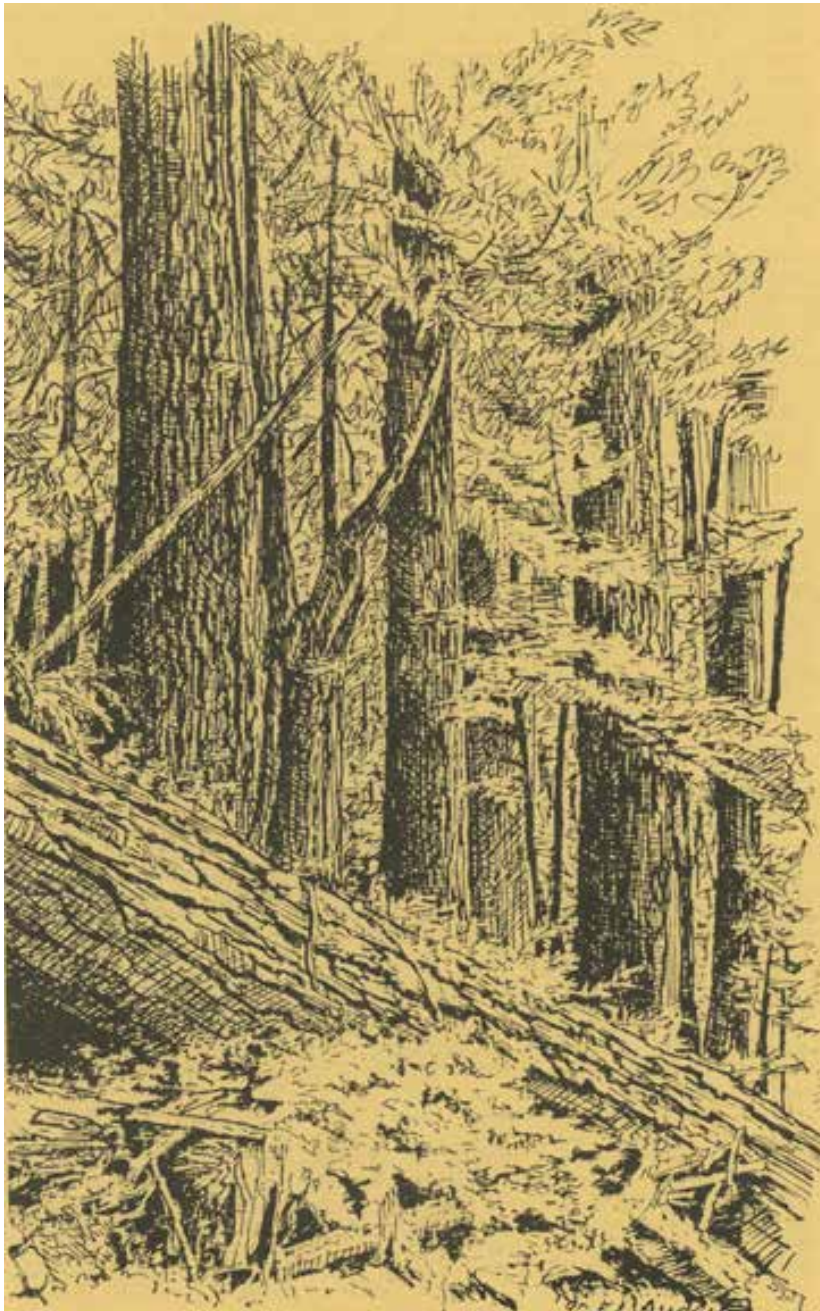
The decline will have a number of causes, some springing from internal contradictions of the sport (for example, though the refinement of equipment led to a surge in popularity, symptoms now are felt of a too-much-candy illness) and others from external socio-economic factors (for example, profligate expenditure of energy, represented by the automobile, will be the mortal blow).

In reality, all the causes are summarized in the immutable maxim of dialectic -- what goes up must come down, precisely

because it went up. One recalls the opinion of many medievalists that monasticism might have survived the kings' envy of the monks' wealth had not the monasteries been so much more attractive residences than the outside, that they became overcrowded, and the sewers got plugged.

I await stoically the onset of the storm of contumely. The mountain shops which have prospered these past dozen years will detest me as deeply as saloon-keepers did Prohibition, and speakeasy-proprietors Repeal. The giant conglomerates which have muscled in on the manufacturing of backpacking equipment (as Disney enterprises did on skiing at Mineral King and Music Corporation of America on National Park

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The Wild Cascades, Winter 1991

Backpacking decline

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 15

tourism at Yosemite) may very well prosecute me as General Motors did Ralph Nader. And the writers now making a vultures' living from backpacking journalism and terrified at the prospect of returning to the offal heaps whence they came surely will pick at whatever bones of my reputation are left after the detectives finish.

History is written by the survivors and though certain of vindication in some distant future I know the retribution due me in the interim for being the first to bring skeletons from the backpacking closet and rattle them in public. I'm all too aware of the evil reputations saddled upon theologians who disagreed with the Fathers of the Church, and upon the Borgias by antagonists who were no less scoundrels but won the battle of political propaganda.

For my own sake and that of family and friends, I wish it were possible to be silent. Where I offend, may my even-handedness be granted; if I've failed to affront any group it's an oversight. I hope of a harsh posterity only that it may grudgingly concede amid its slanders, "He saw his duty and he done it."

Harvey Manning

Cougar Mountain, 1975



Door of the Manning home (aka "The 200 Meter Hut") on Cougar Mountain, where Harvey did most of his writing.

Forestry and Irrigation reminds us that irrigators were once champions of keeping forests intact

By David E. Ortman, N3C member and attorney

As irrigation districts continue to threaten new water storage projects in our National Forests and Wilderness areas, why have irrigators forgotten the history of our National Forests? In his 1959 book *Conservation and the Gospel of Efficiency*, Samuel P. Hays notes that “Western irrigators... pioneered in the theory that watershed vegetation directly affected their water supply. Forests, they argued, absorbed rainfall, retarded stream run-off, and increase the level of ground water: forests retarded snow melting in the early months of the year, reduced spring floods, and saved water for summer use when supplies run low; forests retarded soil erosion and silting in irrigation ditches and reservoirs.”

Those same irrigators “played a major role in establishing the national forests and in defending them from attack. . . . Throughout the [1890s] irrigation groups petitioned, often successfully, that the president reserve particular watersheds as national forests to protect them from commercial use. . . . Irrigators constantly sought to improve protection of the forests from fire and timber depredations, to withdraw them from all commercial use, and to prevent timber cutting and grazing within them.”

There is a wealth of information in the American Forestry Association’s publications of *Forestry and Irrigation* from the early 1900s. I acquired several issues and found an amazing history of how irrigators fought to establish National Forest Reserves all over the public lands.

In a November 1906 article, “The Mining Industry and the Forests,” Lewis E. Aubury, State Mineralogist of California says “That there is urgent need for more national and state legislation in regard to the protection of our forested areas, both from fire and the operations of timber speculators, is a subject which I believe is worthy the attention of the American Mining Congress.... one of the greatest causes for concern is the fact that most of the available timber land is in the hands of a few individuals or corporations. For instance, in California approximately one million acres is controlled by one individual.”

The September 1907 issue mentions that the Fifteenth National Irrigation Congress held in Sacramento, California, included

an address by U.S. Senator Perkins of California, “Without our forests there would be no irrigation.”

In February 1908 came a call to protect natural resources. An editorial called “Equip the Association,” asks, “What greater cause could appeal to philanthropy

“The only trouble with the movement for the preservation of our forests is that it has not gone nearly far enough, and was not begun soon enough.”

—President Theodore Roosevelt
in *Forestry and Irrigation*,
February 1908

than that of preserving our heritage? What weightier obligation can be laid upon the conscience of one who has accumulated millions from our boundless resources than to aid in perpetuating these resources? Men give to the transitory; why not to the permanent? They contribute to small causes, why not to great? They build libraries; why not maintain the supply of material from which books and buildings must be made? They multiply colleges: why not recognize that, whether schooled or unschooled, people must draw their supplies from the earth?”

Another editorial in the same issue, “The Pressing Need”, says “We have the Director of the Reclamation Service pointing to the vast and beneficent work now in progress under Government auspices in the way of redeeming the desert and providing homes for the people; but averring at the same time, that the continuance and success of this work are absolutely dependent upon the retention of forests upon the mountain sides, which in turn, is dependent upon National action.”

Issues from 1907 and 1908 show the AFA mobilizing to protect forests. A March 1907 editorial supported the passage of the Appalachian-White Mountain bill permitting

the federal government to purchase private lands in order to protect the headwaters of rivers and watersheds in the East—a big step in a time when then Speaker of the House Joe Cannon had declared there would be “not one cent for scenery!” Its step-by-step plan for lobbying Congress admonishes readers, “Don’t wait for something to begin: make it begin. Don’t wait for a crowd to get interested; get the crowd interested by interesting the few. All great things have small beginnings. One person can start this movement in any neighborhood, and unless one person starts it, it will not start. Now let all set to work to make sentiment for the Appalachian bill, and by next December a pressure can be brought to bear upon Congress which will be irresistible.” A few issues later, the Forestry Association asked people to send in “a list of names and addresses of a dozen or two of friends who could be interested in this movement.”

From October 1907: “In view of the fact that certain timber cutters, notably the pulp men, cut clean, leaving nothing behind them but stumps, and believe this to be the only profitable course for them to pursue, the question naturally arises as to how pulp wood will be cut when the forester’s ideal is realized and timber slaughter is ended by law.”

From the same issue: “Gradually we are getting our eyes open. The earth is the common foundation upon which all must stand, the common storehouse from which all must draw their supplies. Our natural resources constitute the raw material from which, by the application of labor and capital, all must live, if they are to live at all. The waste of natural resources is a public tragedy if not a public crime. The preservation of these resources is a matter of the greatest public moment.”

It would be helpful if irrigators and we would remember this history.

Want to read more? Find AFA publications from this time period at:

<http://www.onread.com/writer/American-Forestry-Association-102311/>

or download issues of *Forestry and Irrigation* free from https://books.google.com/books/about/Forestry_and_Irrigation.html?id=HUckAQAAMAAJ

Helicopters in Glacier Peak Wilderness area?

Not necessary!

The U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) is seeking permission from the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) to use helicopters to fly in equipment to construct seismic monitoring stations around Glacier Peak. Glacier Peak is one of Washington's six active volcanoes and a not-so-gentle giant. An eruption is considered a low-probability, high-consequence event, but when it happens, it's going to be really bad news for Darrington and much of Snohomish and Skagit counties. Ancient eruptions of Glacier Peak sent lahars (volcanic mudflows) as far as Sedro-Woolley. So the hazard is real, and N3C agrees that it is important for the USGS to monitor Glacier Peak for seismic signals of volcanic activity so downslope communities can be given as much warning as possible if there are signs of an impending eruption.

The good news is the proposed seismic monitoring stations just consist of small

"enclosures" and a solar panel to provide electricity for the monitoring equipment and antennas to track movements with GPS and transmit data to a base receiver. The bad news is USGS claims they need helicopters to haul them.

We don't agree, and we see an ideal opportunity to hire local folks rather than buy expensive helicopter time.

Glacier Peak and surroundings are designated Wilderness, and that's where the USGS plan for helicopters bumps into the Wilderness Act of 1964. The Wilderness Act prohibits the use of motor vehicles, equipment, or permanent structures of any kind in a wilderness area. The Act does give the Secretary of Agriculture some regulatory discretion to compromise this Act such as control of fire, insects, and diseases. The Act does not give USFS or Secretary of Agriculture authority to permit the installation of permanent

structures; that takes an act of Congress to pass an exemption law, as was done on the reconstructed Green Mountain Lookout.

Unlike the Lookout, these seismic stations are relatively small and can be hidden or camouflaged so they minimally disrupt the wilderness experience. But using helicopters to ferry equipment is another matter. The USGS proposes to use helicopters to fly in ten 70-pound lead-acid batteries to each monitoring station. USGS installation personnel would hike in. If they can hike in, then the equipment can be backpacked in, too. Using helicopters has extreme noise pollution impacts as well as required clearings for landing zones. Poor visibility from bad weather can raise the risk of helicopter crashes.

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Dakobed (Glacier Peak) rises above temperate rainforests and creates the deep valley of the Suiattle River. On this least seen and explored "side" of this glorious stratovolcano, you can see the lahar off the Chocolate Glacier (light-colored trench center right).

—TOM HAMMOND PHOTO

Helicopters

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 19

All of these impacts are avoidable! In our comments opposing this proposal, we offered these options:

- The USGS could utilize new technology, lithium-ion batteries that provide twice the power at half the weight, charge five times faster, and last four times as long as lead-acid batteries. Lithium batteries are rated to -40°F and will stand up better than lead-acid batteries in the most frigid Glacier Peak winter. And they don't leak battery acid like the old-style batteries.
- The USGS can specify a modular building that could be backpacked in and assembled on site with hand tools.
- All the other equipment, including 25-pound solar panels, can also be packed in reasonable loads.

Hiring locals to haul this equipment would help Darrington's economy and provide much-needed work to a town with high unemployment. The USGS could employ assistance from the Glacier Peak Institute (GPI) founded after the Oso tragedy. This small grassroots nonprofit provides youth programs in the wilderness in a high-poverty area with few resources, plus opportunities for summer education and employment. This would be an ideal opportunity for marginalized youths to earn money as well as learn about the environment and geology around their community.

N3C does not oppose construction of small, unobtrusive seismic monitoring stations, but we do strongly oppose the proposed use of helicopters. Which, of course, we've let the USGS know.

Book Review



Written in the Snows: Across Time on Skis in the Pacific Northwest by Lowell Skoog
Reviewed by Marc Bardsley

When I first heard of *Written in the Snows* I assumed that it was another skiing guide book, which certainly appealed to me after many years of modest back country skiing myself. I was even more delighted to discover this book is a masterpiece of research into the early days of local skiing, from the time of settlers from Scandinavia and Germany to more recent developments in back country skiing. Reading about these pioneers who brought their lifestyles from the old country to the un-roaded mountains of Washington and Oregon has been an eye-opener. The book offers often-humorous anecdotes and shares trips to escape the forests and reach skiable slopes despite bad weather and transportation difficulties most of us cannot imagine. Even better, in my opinion, are the many old photos of these individuals during the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Author Lowell Skoog, a longtime N3C member, has a reputation of back country skiing prowess himself. Although not as old as his subjects, he stands out as a pioneer in skiing and route-finding adventures. His first-person accounts of remarkable skiing traverses and ascents will be especially interesting to those of us who consider wilderness travel to be the zenith of outdoor experience.

Although I should not have been surprised, the accomplishments of the early women skiers are truly amazing. From winning mixed-gender races to completing long strenuous winter expeditions, they definitely held their own over these interesting years.

Many early skiers were very active in the early days of the conservation movement. They were instrumental in keeping mechanized skiing and overdevelopment out of Mt. Rainier National Park and the future North Cascades National Park. A number of them, like Chuck and Marion Hessey and Grant McConnell, went on to help found N3C.

The development of Northwest clubs and lodges for winter activities is of particular interest. I was astounded to learn of these activities during the early days in places like Cle Elum, Deer Park in the Olympics, Enumclaw and Hood River, Oregon. Mountaineers Club members can learn the history of the club's lodges over the years.

Of interest to climbers is the competition during the 1930s to complete the full ski ascents and descents of our volcano peaks. This seems to have been encouraged by better roads and in my mind, better equipment. Until then, access to most of the majors was by railroad or not-so-convenient logging roads. This was also the time of introduction of metal-edge skis and safer bindings.

One of my favorite stories is about a family who built a ramshackle cabin near Hart's Pass during the hard times of the 1930s. They built snowshoes and then skis to get around during the long winters. One winter when the mother developed medical problems, they used skis to move her to the Winthrop area, where she was loaded on a dog sled and eventually arrived at hospital in Wenatchee for a successful operation.

For winter sports enthusiasts who complain about long drives, long lift lines, and lack of parking, it is humbling to see what real inconvenience was. What we share with the old timers is the rain and bad weather but more importantly, the incomparable Northwest mountains. I have to admit, these early winter enthusiasts seemed to have at least as much fun as anyone.

Seattle City Light Skagit Project #553 relicensing update

By Dave Fluharty

Over the last year, SCL, its consultants, and collaborators have been exceptionally busy producing Initial Study Reports (ISR) by the March 8, 2022 required submission deadline to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC). This update is a modified composite of recent communications from Andrew Bearlin, Skagit License Manager, Natural Resources and Hydro Licensing Division, Seattle City Light.

The intention of the ISR is to provide an update on the progress of the relicensing studies through the 2021 study season and share plans for the 2022 study season. Recognizing the volume of information being generated by this Study Program and the demands of participating in the ILP timeline, SCL provided the following study reports for review by participants in the FERC relicensing process, i.e., tribes, federal and state agencies, and non-governmental stakeholders of which NCCC is one. The page count of these studies is 3000 and growing:

N3C participants are reviewing over 3000 pages of studies.

- Cultural Resources Survey
- Reservoir Native Fish Genetics Baseline Study
- Reservoir Fish Stranding and Trapping Risk Assessment
- Entrainment Study
- Reservoir Shoreline Erosion Study
- Sediment Deposition in Reservoirs Affecting Resource Areas of Concern Study
- Project Facility Lighting Inventory
- Recreation Use and Facility Assessment
- Project Sound Assessment
- Lower Skagit River Recreation Flow Study
- Vegetation Mapping Study

- Wetland Assessment
- Threatened, and Endangered Plants Study
- Marbled Murrelet Study
- Special-status Amphibian Study
- Golden Eagle Habitat Analysis
- Northern Goshawk Habitat Analysis
- Beaver Habitat Assessment

During a two-day meeting March 21 and 23 SCL will provide an update on each of the relicensing studies and an opportunity for licensing participants to engage in a brief Q&A with the study teams. April 7, 2022 is the deadline for City Light to file a meeting summary. More important, May 7, 2022 is the deadline for stakeholders to file disagreements on the meeting summary, including any requests for modification to ongoing studies or proposals for new studies. NCCC is tracking these studies and will attend the meetings and file disagreements as appropriate.

Notes from the January 13 Icicle Work Group meeting

Taken by David Ortman

A discussion of “Mechanisms for Protecting Water for Instream Flow” was deleted from the agenda.

Guiding principles. The Icicle Work Group (IWG) reviewed its 2017 “Guiding Principles” (GP) as they had been formulated prior to new Work Group participants joining.

No municipal or irrigation water conservation is mentioned as a principle. Only water conservation from the Leavenworth National Fish Hatchery.

The GP do not include “water banking” and the IWG is not working on this.

Restore/Repair Eightmile Lake to acquire up to 2,400 acre feet (1,125 acre feet of additional storage) is still in the GP. No one, including Lisa Pelley from Trout Unlimited, objected to this.

Peter Dykstra (a co-facilitator) challenged why the Wilderness Act was called

out in the Regulatory Compliance section, suggesting that it should be deleted as it is included with compliance with federal laws. Melissa Downs (Department of Ecology) admitted that this was mainly due to pressure from Alpine Lakes Protection Society (ALPS), to make sure that the Wilderness Act was not forgotten.

The Work Group also discussed the Operating Procedures (how the Work Group makes decisions.) Find them at: <https://bit.ly/IcicleOps>

Draft Dam Safety Office assessments at Colchuck, Square, and Klonaqua Lakes have been prepared, but final assessments are not likely to be finished until February.

The Work Group is working on a Conservation StoryMap (apparently to “sell” their version of water conservation

constraints).

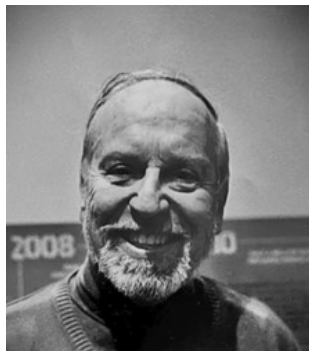
ALPS is patiently waiting for the Eightmile Lake DEIS due late spring.

Because the Icicle Work Group website remains out of date, the public does not have current information on what the IWG is up to or timely access to meeting notes. The Work Group asked for help in updating the site, <https://www.co.chelan.wa.us/natural-resources/pages/icicle-work-group>

No one provided any public comment. When environmental/conservation organizations are absent from the meeting and there is no public opposition, it leaves the IWG and the Department of Ecology with the distinct impression that no one cares about the Alpine Lakes Wilderness.

The next IWG meeting will take place April 14, 2022.

Longtime N3C member Norman Winn remembered



Mountaineer and conservationist Norm Winn died in January at 82. He spent decades climbing Washington state's tallest peaks,

protecting its wilderness from deforestation and mining, and lobbying for legislation that protects parks, lakes and wildlife reserves as far north as the Arctic Circle.

Norm was active during N3C's effort to pass the legislation for the Boulder River, Wild Sky and H. M. Jackson Wilderness areas. As a member of the Washington Forest Practices Advisory board, he helped with efforts opposing timber sales. He was a member of the law firm that included

long time N3C officers Tom Brucker, and Charley Ehlert, both now deceased.

"We did lots of climbing trips, especially in the North Cascades including the Glacier Peak Wilderness Area, Northern Pickets, and Alpine Lakes," said former N3C president Marc Bardsley, who met Winn in 1967. "Norm was an extremely generous financial supporter of N3C."

Norm Winn was raised in a Cave!

Ed Henderson

I worked for many years with Norm when he was the long-term chairman of the Mountaineers Conservation committee. I owe a great deal of whatever little skill I have as a letter writer/commentator to Norm. There will be, I'm sure, many more and better tales of Norm and his contributions in the PNW environmental/conservation field, but let me digress.

As a U.S. Marine and an amateur military historian I had a special con-

nection and status with Norm. Norm's parents were missionaries in China in the 1930s when Norm was born. As the war approached they were evacuated to the Philippines where they were trapped when WWII started—or more accurately, when the USA was attacked on December 7, 1941. Norm's father was interned for the duration of the war, but his mother with Norm and his siblings hid in the mountains, living in caves, succored by loyal Filipinos. After two years on the run in 1944, the family was evacuated by submarine. The submarine was depth-charged by Japanese destroyers before the family reached safety in Australia. I think Norm appreciated that I knew and understood the circumstances of his family's rescue. No, the U.S. Navy didn't send submarines to rescue and evacuate stranded missionaries, Norm was just lucky enough to catch a ride on a sub that had been sent to retrieve a top-secret set of Japanese strategic plans that had been captured. A real intelligence coup.

RIP Rowland Tabor



N3C member Rowland Tabor, a USGS geologist and author of *Routes and Rocks* and *Mountain Mosaic*, died in January. As Chief of the Branch of Western

Regional Geology, he wrote professional papers and created geologic maps of Kentucky, the Moon, Nevada, the Olympic Peninsula, and the North Cascades. After his retirement in 1995, he stayed on at the Survey as Geologist Emeritus, where he

continued to publish geologic maps of his beloved North Cascades.

Tabor was a stalwart advocate for NOT developing mineral resources in sensitive, scenic and roadless areas until and unless necessary, dating back to the era when much of the North Cascades was not yet legislatively protected. That's not the standard position of an exploration geologist of his era, most of whom were sent out looking for mineral deposits to be exploited. N3C was glad to have an advocate for mineral conservation in a USGS geologist.

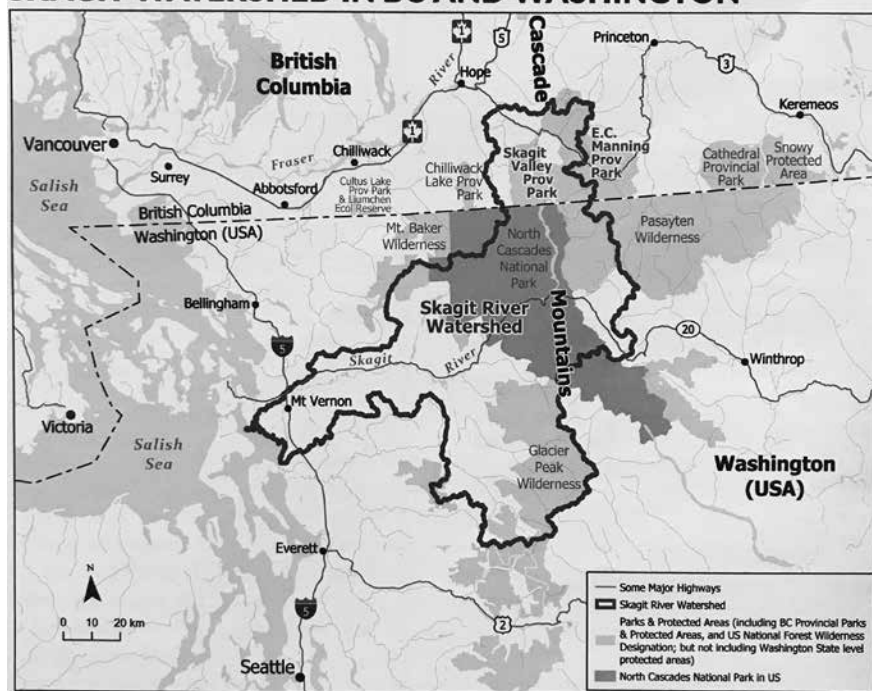
A mountaineer who made the first ascent of the north face of Johannesburg Mountain, Tabor's *Routes and Rocks* series were relied on by many exploring the North Cascades. Tabor got in some hot water with N3C board member Harvey Manning over publishing maps of "high routes". *Routes and Rocks in Glacier Peak*

was pulled from publication by Manning at Mountaineers Books, after Manning, its founder, encountered a new outfit called Outward Bound taking large groups into the remote high country using Tabor's guide, which shows details like campsites with water and views, along previously undocumented "high routes". When Tabor published *The North Cascades: A Mountain Mosaic* about the National Park region, he omitted the high routes on his maps.

N3C honors Tabor for popularizing the geologic story and landmarks of the region in his guidebooks. "I met him once when he spoke to the NW Geological Society in Seattle and was in awe of his work and ability to convey the essence of it to the public," said N3C president Phil Fenner. "His influence will be lasting and it was an honor to have met him."

Skagit River donut hole to close—if funded

SKAGIT WATERSHED IN BC AND WASHINGTON



Wilderness Committee, www.wildernesscommittee.org

The donut hole is about to close—once the money is in the bank.

Under an agreement between the B.C. government, the Skagit Environmental Endowment Commission (SEEC), and the Imperial Metals Corporation, Imperial Metals will surrender all its mining and related rights within the so-called Skagit River donut hole, a 22.4-square mile gap of unprotected B.C. lands that is home to the headwaters of the Skagit River.

Mineral rights are not “extinguished” for free. Imperial Metals will be paid \$24 million Canadian dollars, including \$7 million each from the B.C. government and Washington State, and \$5 million each from the Nature Conservancy of Canada and the SEEC. \$4.5 million of Washing-

ton’s portion is included in Governor Inslee’s supplemental budget request, awaiting approval by the State legislature. The Seattle City Council must approve its \$1.25 million share, too.

“This is an extraordinary conservation success that will benefit current and future generations of Coast Salish People,” said Swinomish tribal chairman Steve Edwards in a press release. “We express our gratitude to all our conservation partners who advocated with us to protect our salmon and ecosystem forever.”

Edwards specifically gave a shout-out to British Columbia premier John Horgan, Washington governor Jay Inslee, Seattle City Light, the SEEC, tribal and First Nation partners, and “the transboundary coalition of conservation advocates that have remained committed to forever protecting the Skagit headwaters as a priceless

international natural treasure.”

N3C is part of the 300-member Skagit Headwaters Coalition that stopped Imperial Metals’ permit proposal to mine for gold in this ecologically and culturally sensitive place. The group included other conservation groups, U.S. and Canadian tribes, non-governmental organizations, recreation groups, elected officials and many Skagit organizations and businesses.

This stellar deal is the culmination of a 35+ year epic effort to protect the Skagit River from more and higher dams, logging, and mining.

From N3C’s perspective, the hero in this story is the SEEC. It was created by the 1984 High Ross Treaty between the City of Seattle and the province of British Columbia, after Seattle City Light’s plans to raise the Ross Dam and flood Canadian land were stopped by N3C and other conservation groups.

Canadian and American commission members work to ensure the preservation and protection of the natural and cultural resources and recreational opportunities of the Upper Skagit Watershed through advocacy, promoting international cooperation and strategic partnerships and investments.

Annual payments from Seattle City Light and BC Hydro help support SEEC’s work, which mostly takes place in Canada.

In its press release, SEEC said it views the donut hole agreement as an example of international cooperation that sets a strong precedent for the US and Canada to collaborate for the protection of precious transboundary ecosystems.

“This is a blueprint for how more preservation deals ought to be cut, with government and environmental stakeholders collaborating for big-ticket agreements that carry benefits for so many,” said a January 31, 2022 editorial in the *Seattle Times*, urging the legislature and Seattle to finish and fund the deal.

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We will waive their dues for the first year.

The wild Cascades thank you!

Ross Dam Mail Box opened



A box of photos from the estate of N3C founders Joe and Margaret Miller has been opened at last and the contents scanned to reveal a time capsule of many previously unknown photos of and by the Millers. The "Mail Box" itself was probably used at meetings to collect letters opposing High Ross Dam, one of the greatest victories of N3C and one the Millers aided immensely by documenting what would have been lost if Big Beaver Valley were drowned by High Ross. Find portraits of the Millers and their restored Big Beaver survey:



Big Beaver Ecological Survey with restored images: bit.ly/BigBeaverSurvey

More about the Millers: bit.ly/JoeMargaretMiller

Explore the scanned contents of the box here: bit.ly/MillerBox



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Koma Kulshan (Mt. Baker) looms over Heather Meadows on a rare bluebird day this winter. —PHIL FENNER PHOTO