

The Volunteer

North Cascades National Park Service Complex

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



Summer 2005





Colonial Peak and Pyramid Peak, as seen from the Diablo Lake Overlook
Photo by Michael Liang

Welcome

to our premier issue of *The Volunteer*. Since volunteers are integral to the success of the National Park Mission, we feel that it is important to foster a community of former and current volunteers. Whether you are thousands of miles away from the North Cascades or living on the Marblemount compound, we hope that you enjoy the experiences and images of your fellow volunteers. If you have not volunteered with us yet and are interested, this newsletter is a good taste of your future experiences. With over 30,000 hours contributed annually, we knew there were stories to tell. Hopefully, you will smile as the stories spark a memory or perhaps become inspired to volunteer for another season! We plan to continue this newsletter as time and budget allow and would love to include your submissions. Stories and images can be sent electronically to Charles_Beall@nps.gov, or mailed to *North Cascades National Park, 7280 Ranger Station Rd, Marblemount, WA, 98267*. Have a safe and enjoyable summer, and we look forward to seeing you back at North Cascades National Park. As always, thank you for your time and effort!

Charles Beall
Skagit District Interpreter
Volunteer-in-the-Parks Coordinator

Michael Liang
Seasonal Interpreter
Volunteer Newsletter Coordinator

The Mission of the volunteer program at North Cascades National Park Service Complex is to involve individuals and groups in the preservation and enhancement of the park's resources in an atmosphere of respect and cooperation. The program will affirm their roles as stakeholders in the National Park Service and in the North Cascades and will recognize their contributions.

STATS & FACTS

Volunteers at North Cascades National Park Service Complex (FY 2004):

301

Hours contributed:

33,298

Volunteers total in the National Park System:

132,205

Monetary value of volunteer efforts nation-wide:

\$85,900,000

Total hours of NPS volunteer service nation-wide:

5,045,621

Volunteer Positions in the North Cascades:

Campground Host
Trail Crew
Interpreter
Fire Effects Monitor
Wilderness Ranger
Plant re-veger
Artist-in-Residence
Curator
Park Ranger
Botanist
Map-maker
Web-designer
Educator...

Restoration and Revegetation Efforts Underway at Environmental Learning Center

*Erin Schneider, North Cascades Institute Restoration Coordinator
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North Cascades National Park Service Complex has a rich history of native plant restoration and revegetation. Efforts on Cascade Pass, Ross Lake, in the Newhalem area and beyond have helped maintain and enhance diverse ecosystems in the park's wild lands. These optimistic acts on behalf of the future and in respect for the past are extending to a new place in need of restoring, the North Cascades Environmental Learning Center site.

This summer and continuing into next year, North Cascades Institute in partnership with North Cascades National Park will begin the process of native plant landscaping and restoration at the new Environmental Learning Center. Good stewardship requires understanding both the land and its history. The goal of this project is high quality ecological restoration and revegetation. By the end of the third year the Learning Center landscape will be 100% complete, 100% native, and self-sustaining. Initial efforts will consist of planting 22,000 native plants that have been grown from seeds and cuttings collected at the site by park staff and volunteers prior to construction. In order to accomplish this task, more than 70 volunteers, 10 organizations, and 2 contract crews have been recruited and trained. That's a lot of hole digging, planting, and watering! Work parties are arranged for weekdays and for weekends until November 2005.



(above) Volunteers participate in removing ox-eye daisy, an invasive species, along the shores of Diablo Lake at the new North Cascades Environmental Learning Center. (below) Reveging the Highway 20 corridor near Newhalem. Photos courtesy of Erin Schneider.

This marks the first time that North Cascades Institute and North Cascades National Park have organized a volunteer restoration project on such a large scale. Project participants will help meet the responsibilities of restoring and revegetating native plant and soil communities. This includes: transplanting, seed collecting, invasive species removal, mulching, and general plant care and maintenance.

Restoration draws people into learning ecology through doing. Restoration done by researchers, practitioners, and volunteers, combined with direct instruction, results in enhanced stewardship of the land and makes for a potent educational combination. As we continue to explore the juncture where ecological restoration and education intersect, consider the depth of ecological learning that results from restoring and rebuilding de-

graded landscapes. Consider what it will take to restore a sense of confidence and compassion for people in communities. This restoration project provides families, organizations/groups, and individuals with meaningful experiences volunteering their time in a beautiful setting while helping their public lands.



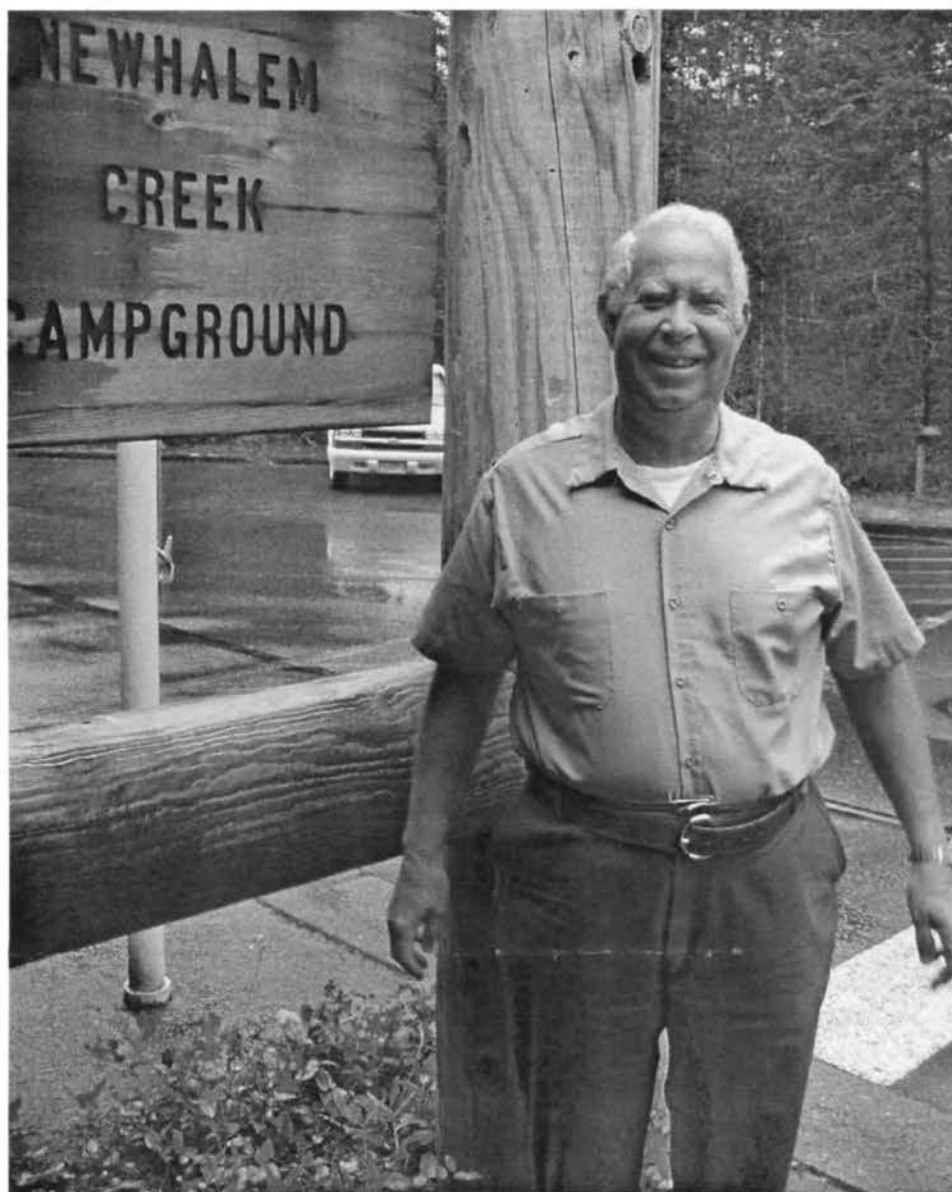


Photo by Michael Liang

VOLUNTEER PROFILE

As a Campground Host for the Newhalem Creek Campground, Dallas Mathews is known for his tricks and mischievous smile. For the past six years, he has helped visitors and teased staff in both Glacier and North Cascades National Parks. "Actually, it's pretty easy because it's so much fun," Mathews explains about his job. "We get to answer a lot of questions about the park, places to eat, what's on down the road, and then solve simple little camping problems. Our job is to see that we do as much as we can to make sure people have a good time."

A retired school teacher and administrator, Mathews has plenty of experience working with people and solving their problems. With an easy laugh, he puts the park visitors at ease as they enter the park. Since he works out of the Campground Registration Kiosk, he is often the first representative of the National Park Service that the visitor encounters. Meeting people is Mathews' greatest joy as a volunteer. "Especially the elderly people," he says, "They get a real kick about you taking time with them, because no one pays any attention to them."

When he's not working at the kiosk, Mathews is most likely to be found standing behind a portable barbeque with park employees waiting hungrily at his picnic table. He has a special fondness for hosting law enforcement rangers. At one point in Glacier National Park, he had nearly the entire LE staff over for dinner. cars parked around his trailer, he

DALLAS MATHEWS

NOCA's Camp Host and Resident Trickster

by: Michael Liang, Seasonal Interpreter

I was just about to sit down and eat dinner when I heard a knock on my front door. Two young bicyclists, wet and muddy from the afternoon's rain, asked, "Are you Michael?" I hesitantly replied yes, while thinking, and you are...?

"Oh, Dallas told us that we could use your dryer," they said. I opened the door wider. "I see. Come on in."

As they tracked mud to our laundry room, I rolled my eyes at my housemates. "Dallas," I said, and that's all I needed to explain.

With 5 patrol cars parked around his trailer, he wondered what the visitors must have thought. "A raid! A raid!" he predicted. Feeding the young seasonal staff comes with an almost paternal ambition. "I'm a strong believer in a social community," Mathews said, "and there's nothing so communal as people having their stomach full. It's a good medium for bringing people together and having company."

Over beers and, in Mathews' case, a Manhattan, park stories are swapped with a tall-tale flourish for which campground hosts are notorious. Working with thousands of visitors each sum-

mer in a place far from the familiarity of their home, accidents are inevitable. And of course, most of them happen in the middle of the night. Mathews recalls one such time when a grandmother and her granddaughter pounded on his trailer door. Dressed only in his underwear, he groggily cracked the door open. The grandmother grabbed the handle and pushed herself and her granddaughter inside the vehicle. "There's a bear after us!" he recalls them saying, "So I casually—as casually as you can be in your underwear—got dressed and went out with them. It happened to just be a couple of big blond rocks outside of the women's restroom."

In this type of work, a healthy sense of humor is an added bonus. That obvious-

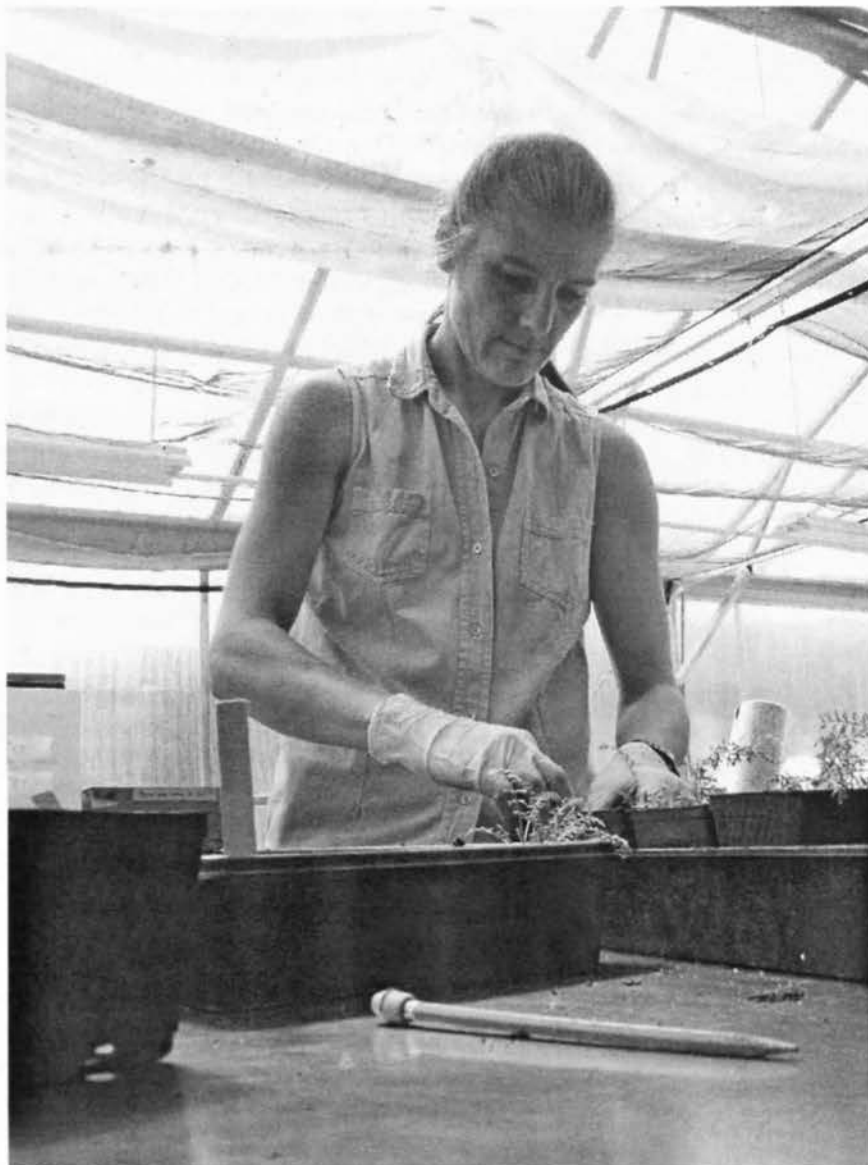
ly comes naturally to Mathews. He also has a deep commitment to and love for his job. As a volunteer in retirement, Mathews does not seek the money. He genuinely finds happiness working with the visitors. At the end of the season, he'll drive back to his native Florida to play granddaddy to his grandsons. "They keep me busy hauling them between soccer and baseball," he said. Until then, however, he'll be equally busy with the unpredictable antics of visitors, weekly potlucks, and new schemes to pull on unsuspecting park staff.

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Reveg Efforts



The Plant Propagation and Revegetation staff of North Cascades National Park is responsible for maintaining the integrity of the natural resources by collecting, growing, and planting native species at impacted sites within the park. For instance, Ambriel Sansegret, right, is volunteering with the Falls Project, where approximately 2,600 seedlings from 30 different species will be planted in the construction zone, just east of Newhalem.



Top left photo courtesy of Cheryl Holmquist, above photo by Michael Liang

So There I was:

BIO

As Press Officer for CARE International, a development and relief organization, Lynn has been working in Africa since 2000. She decided to spend this year's vacation time back in the states as NOCA's Artist-in-Residence for the month of May.



Lynn Heinisch
Spring 2005 Artist-in-Residence

Photo courtesy of Lynn Heinisch

She has traveled to and written about the people recovering from war, natural disasters, and other atrocities in Angola, Ghana, Sierra Leone, Niger, Madagascar, Mozambique, Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Malawai, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Lesotho, South Africa, Kenya, Sudan, Darfur, and (phew!) Mali.

Lynn spent her residency exploring, writing, sharing her experiences, and enjoying the weekly potlucks.

The purpose of the Artist-in-Residence program is to host artists who will utilize their skills to help park visitors, neighbors, and staff explore the meanings and significance of the North Cascades.

*Interested? Contact
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The superintendent told me all good ranger stories begin like that. So there I was. A Tuesday night in May, the one day it didn't rain all week. There were plenty of microbrews and outdoorsy people in fleece. The first potluck of the season. A couple of Golden Retrievers tussled in the yard, and a toddler darted just steps ahead of his parents.

The hostess, Meredith, baked two lasagnas on her day off from the comm center. A third-year seasonal ranger introduced himself to her by his call sign: "Hi, 714 Williams." "Dave!" she said, seeing his face for the first time. Over chocolate chip cookies, brownies and rhubarb pie, Russ told a story on the education specialist. Paula was a backcountry ranger when she hiked up Sourdough to check out the lookout. She planned to use the sleeping bag inside, but arrived late in the day to find only the tip of the building poking through the snow. She spent a long night hunched in the forest.

Jesse walked by and heard Russ explaining his carpentry job. "He's being inappropriately humble," he said. Russ is an expert on historic renovations and last winter restored a 100-year-old log cabin.

Jesse's team maintains the park's collection of photos, documents and 50,000 plant species. They unearth evidence and stories about the people who have lived in the mountains during the last 8,500 years. From Meredith's front yard, Jesse pointed to where the first ranger station stood.

Charles, who runs the visitor center, arrived with Nikki's chocolate chip cookies, and Nikki. Stinky Bob's nemesis Pat brought the pie she baked after working in the greenhouse. The "weed guy," Todd, carried in two six-packs. Kelly, the head wilderness ranger, came after her run. Kelly is "a genuine accomplished hero," Paula said. "Who knows how many thousands of lives she has saved? When it hits the fan and you hear Kelly's voice on the radio, you know everything's going to turn out as best it can."

Next to a log in the yard, a different Pat showed his photos of alpine plants, peaks and sunrises. He described setting up the tripod as a bear chased a mountain goat, and talked Irish dancing with Megan, who organizes programs at the North Cascades Institute.

Mignonne, the plant ecologist, teased Rob, who is studying glaciers, that plants are the heart of the park. Rob countered with a fist in the air: "rocks and ice."

Jeff was starting the next day in his first season on trails. Carl, fresh from the ranger academy, would spend the summer at the base of Hozomeen, Kerouac's "prettiest mountain I ever seen." Dallas from Florida would again be host at the Newhalem campground, so visitor center staff could look forward to Costco muffin deliveries. Winter is over, Charles joked, when Dallas migrates back.

And so it was.

“The Best Things in Life are Free”

By: Nathaniel Shober, Seasonal Interpreter
2003 SCA Intern

Depending on one's perspective there may be several avenues in which this title can be interpreted. Down my avenue, I worked for free, and it was one of the best experiences of my life on many levels. Being a volunteer at North Cascades National Park gave me freedom, pushed me past my boundaries, taught me to be humble, and above all opened my world beyond what I had fathomed.

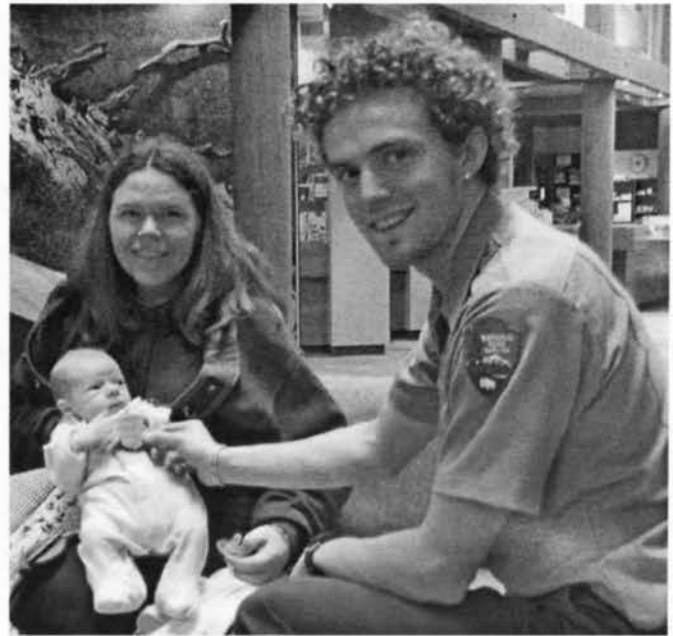
In the summer of 2003, I volunteered at NOCA as an SCA. I had just graduated from college six months prior to my service at the park. Like almost every college grad overwhelmed with the idea of committing to the workforce, I had absolutely no inkling as to what was to become of me. Those job fairs didn't help either – full of corporate mentality with the occasional military recruiter. They just made me feel so small. There had to be something wild and alternative. As fate had it, I came across the director of one of the job fairs. He asked me, “Did you find anything worth while?” I replied with a soft, “No.” After we talked for a little while he gave a lead that led me to a person in interpretation of national parks. I signed on, and upon arriving in the North Cascades, I still had no idea what my job would entail. What I did know, however, was that I was out of Chicago and in this fairy dreamland of wonder.

As a volunteer for the NPS inter-

pretive division, I developed three public programs: a guided walk, patio talk, and an evening program. How could I possibly do this? I knew nothing about this dynamic landscape. My ability to adapt and be in a constant state of mindfulness would be tested. Over the course of a few weeks I figured out my themes for the programs. Because I was a volunteer, I felt as if I was given the freedom to be ‘alternative’ in my presentations. What could I give people that they would never experience anywhere else?

The highlight of my service as a volunteer, besides exploring the hinterland, was giving a program on edible and medicinal plants of the North Cascades. At first I struggled. But like any hard fought quest, in the end it was a reward that would turn out to be priceless. Throughout the summer my program, “The Green Scene” developed further and further. I felt as if I was actually teaching people and they were listening – that was power in my mind. I ended my program with a rap that I wrote on edible and medicinal plants. People loved it.

Currently, I am pursuing a degree in natural and alternative medicine



Nathaniel Shober presents Kyler Crapper with his first Junior Ranger Badge in the North Cascades Visitor Center. Kyler's dad, Jeff, is a volunteer with the Interpretation division. NPS Photo.

that encompasses the use of medicinal herbs and holistic healing. I attribute my new field of study to my experience as a volunteer in the North Cascades. Furthermore, I attribute the essence of who I am today with my work as a volunteer here at the park. There was something magical that happened to me among the wilderness of the North Cascades. As if I was living vicariously through the heartbeat that pulses this park to life, I was being pumped with life. Indeed I was lured here for a reason, and I was guided to truth. Through the people I encountered, the people that taught me, and through the earth that spoke to me, I was shown how I could one day live my life perfectly. If it were up to me, I would be a volunteer until the end of my days.

*Nathaniel can be reached at
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VOLUNTEER BULLETIN

Volunteering is easy! At North Cascades National Park, we have volunteer opportunities for any age, skill, and time commitment. Here are a few sample projects where you can help:

All I have is one weekend this summer...

Volunteer with the North Cascades Institute and North Cascades National Park as we restore and revegetate the new North Cascades Environmental Learning Center on Diablo Lake. See page 3 for more details.

I live nearby and can help a couple times a week...

The Visitor Center would love to have additional volunteers to help with information services and give educational programs. Resource Management is also in need of extra hands for their projects.

I've got the entire summer free!

Some of the most rewarding and unique volunteer experiences are available as summer positions. The Student Conservation Association (SCA) is partnered with the National Park Service in providing trail crews, interpretive and resource management interns, and backcountry ranger assistants. You don't have to be a student; Some of the crews have volunteers as young as 15.

Retired? Many of our most committed volunteers are spending their retirement summers in the North Cascades. Campground hosts and interpreters are some of the more popular volunteer opportunities in the park.

How to get involved: Charles Beall,

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Cheryl Holmquist

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Rosemary Seifried

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Craig Holmquist

Trail Crews
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Kerry Olson

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