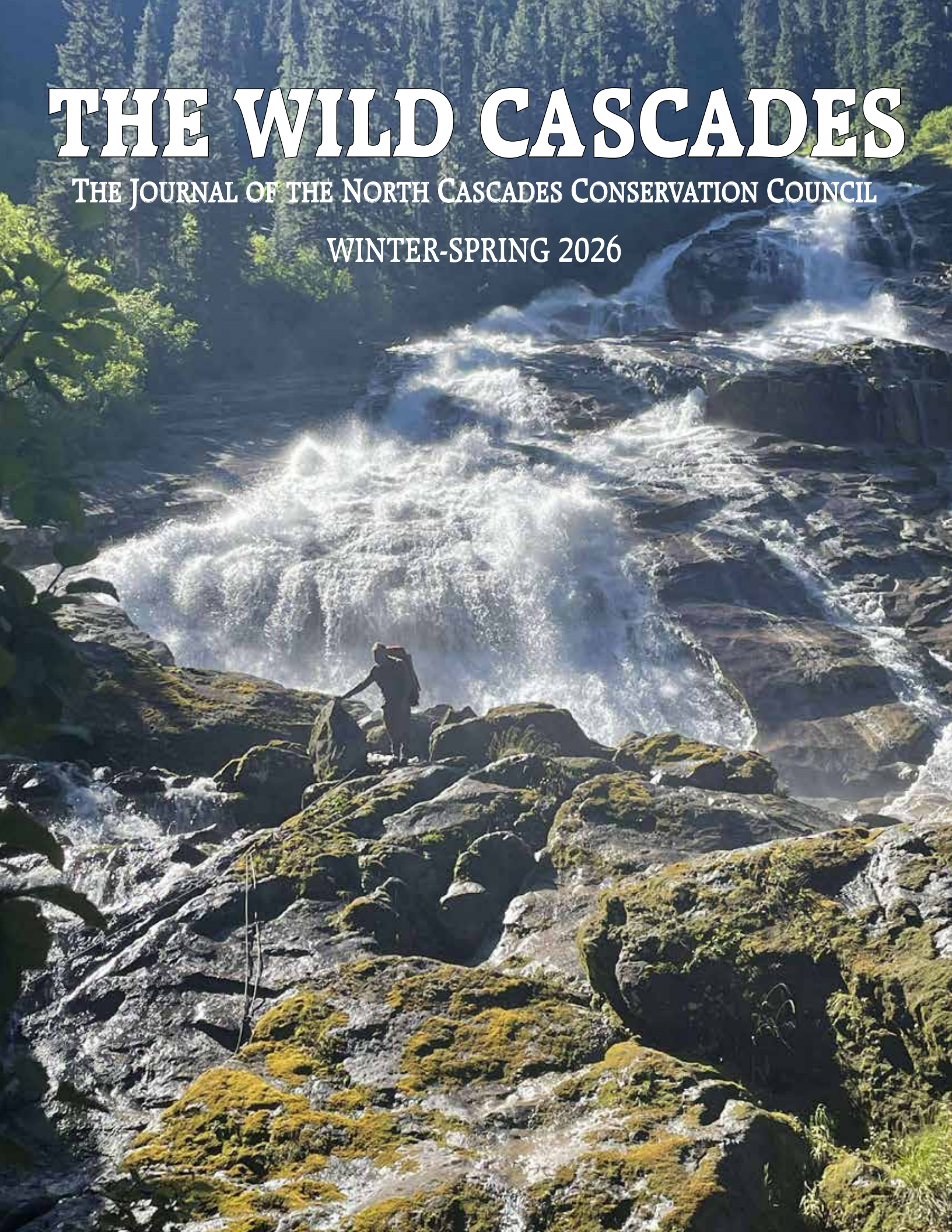


THE WILD CASCADES

THE JOURNAL OF THE NORTH CASCADES CONSERVATION COUNCIL

WINTER-SPRING 2026



THE WILD CASCADES ■ Winter-Spring 2026

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COVER: Depot Cr. Falls, on a remote access trail to the North Cascades from Chilliwack Lake, BC, Canada. —DOUG BARDSLEY PHOTO

The Wild Cascades

Journal of the North Cascades Conservation Council

EDITOR: Anne Basye

EDITORIAL BOARD: Philip Fenner, David Fluharty and Ed Henderson

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The Wild Cascades Editor

To update your address or request electronic delivery of *The Wild Cascades*, email info@northcascades.org

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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 North Cascades Ecosystem. Action is pursued through administrative, legal, and public participation channels to protect the lands, waters, plants and wildlife.

Over the last six decades 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 William 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.

N3C would like to acknowledge the North Cascade Range and adjacent areas as the ancestral homelands of Indigenous Peoples, First Nations, and all who have lived here for millennia and have stewarded this land since time immemorial.

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Founded in 1957
SEATTLE, WASHINGTON

PRESIDENT'S LETTER WINTER-SPRING 2026

With horrible news coming at us from all directions of the social and political world, the environmental damage being done and planned by the current administration in DC can seem to fade in the news cycles. That's where we come in. No one cares more about our own "big backyard" than N3C members, and we need to do everything we can to raise awareness and resist. It's our job to call attention, hold the line and push back—important actions in defense of our remaining intact ecosystem in the North Cascades. The attacks are coming as fast and furious as the attacks on sanctuary cities, immigrant populations and foreign countries. As our neighbor to the north put it, "There's almost nothing normal in the US now, and that's the truth."

What's the latest egregious abnormality in NW forests? The Forest Service calling every damaging logging operation an "emergency!" In recent years the "restoration ruse" arose, used to extract timber by claiming it helps the forest to log it. Now it seems every forest has to be cut down because of a timber-supply "emergency." Which doesn't exist. There's a glimmer of hope from south of us where the same false emergency was claimed in the Klamath, and our partner organizations there are suing to stop them. We will probably be doing the same thing here shortly if the Forest Service issues "emergency" declarations to bypass environmental laws in our North Cascades National Forests, too.

Even if the Forest Service doesn't choose the "emergency" path opened by the Trump EO last March, N3C will doubtless be embroiled in multiple lawsuits as logging roars forward on public lands on both sides of the Cascade crest this year. Cutting the gorgeous and rare wet east-side forest of the Twisp River valley is ramping up as this issue goes to press! The slide-prone N. Fk. Stillaguamish project will be next. And there will be more. Rapid response, legal action, and more public awareness will be the order of the hour.

None of which will be simple, quick or inexpensive. Your help will be needed to see this through. Our members are our lifeline, and the hope for the forests. I urge you to get in touch with us, let us know what skills and resources you can offer.

Resistance: that's what I call genuine emergency!

Phil Fenner

philf@northcascades.org



N3C Actions

NOVEMBER 2025
to MARCH 2026

*Advocacy carried out by
dedicated N3C volunteers
in the last four months to
protect and preserve the
North Cascades lands,
waters, plants and wildlife.*



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.

- Abstained from signing Skagit River Hydroelectric Project, FERC Project No. 553-235, Offer of Settlement for Relicensing of the Skagit River Hydroelectric Project. *See page 12.*



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.

- Met with new Acting North Cascades National Park (NOCA) Sup. Danika Globokar in Sedro Woolley Park HQ to discuss Stehekin River flood damage and Park management issues. Agreed to further meetings. *See page 11.*
- Donated \$1k to Western Environmental Law Center (WELC) for its work to clarify our efforts on the Twisp projects. *See page 15.*
- Attended WELC Webinars on tools and strategies for the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), our primary tool to influence projects.
- Spoke to *Seattle Times* about Company Creek Road and development issues in Stehekin.

Join our N3C Facebook page!

We're up to 874 followers and growing. Help us build our clout by friending us and then recommending our page to your friends concerned about preserving the North Cascades.



874 people
like this



PROTECTING ANCIENT AND LEGACY 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 U. S. Forest Service (USFS) Midnight project objection meeting. Ric Bailey spoke for N3C. See page 17.
- Signed onto Washington Wild (WA Wild) letter to State legislators supporting Trust Land Transfers.
- Donated \$10k to Stewards of Washington State Lands, formed by former N3C board member Jim Freeburg to pursue Trust Land Transfers.
- Signed onto comment letter on the USFS Environmental Assessment for Post-Fire Recovery Actions on National Forest System Lands by Center for Biological Diversity (CBD), Silvix Resources, Defenders of Wildlife and Southern Environmental Law Center.
- Submitted objections to Mount Baker Snoqualmie National Forest (MBSNF) Forestwide Thinning Analysis, opposing vast proposed thinning. See page 19.
- Signed on to WA Wild letter urging Gov. Ferguson to include State Forest protections in Supplemental Capital Budget Request.



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.

- Attended meetings 3 and 4 of Chelan Community Advisory Group on Stehekin, focused on Company Creek Road, power plant and micro-grid power.
- Attended meeting on initial proposal to build new Company Cr. road to bypass washout from December floods and build new riprap levee along riverbank. National Park Service (NPS) funding is secured only for a road. Chelan County's Shoreline Master Plan prohibits levees along the Stehekin River banks. See page 8.
- Attended NOCA Visitor Use Management Plan (VUMP) meeting with NPS. See page 14.
- Requested "Letter of Concurrence" and "Biological Assessment" for the Twisp Restoration Project from USFS. This action led CBD to file a Notice of Intent to Sue under ESA on the Twisp project.
- Sent letter re. log truck safety to WA Department of Transportation & Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration re: excessive driver hours hauling logs for Twisp and Midnight projects.



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.

- Signed Earthjustice letter opposing US Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and National Marine Fisheries Service's (NMFS) proposed changes to regulations about species listings, critical habitat designations, and inter-agency consultations under the Endangered Species Act.
- Signed on to WA Wild letter opposing selloff of public lands.
- Members in the Methow did ground-truthing work to document logging in the Twisp project. See page 18.

Make a difference!

**Horrified by events in this country?
Want to be part of fighting to protect our public lands?**

**N3C needs you!
We have openings for:**

- volunteer board members
- I.T. help
- writers
- legal and policy advisors
- lawyers

Please contact N3C board president Phil Fenner at philf@northcascades.org

Atmospheric river damages

Hidden Lake road damage

For many years, N3C has maintained that National Forests have too many roads, mostly built on the cheap for timber extraction, which are subject to damage whenever storms occur. Climate change has intensified those storms and made them more frequent. Given increasing budget constraints at the same time, widespread washouts will simply occur too often to fix them all, and the fixes will be more and more costly. December 2025 was a classic example of an early-winter rain-on-snow event—the kind that has happened more often in recent years—and it caused significant damage. Some of which was made worse by runoff and debris flows from burned landscapes, another accelerator of road damage from a changing climate that's hotter and dryer in the summer and wetter in the winter.



This new washout appeared on the road to the Hidden Lake trailhead, where Sibley Cr. went through an undersized culvert, after December's rain-on-snow event. More such washouts will doubtless be found as hikers start heading to trailheads this Spring.

—ROBERT KENDALL PHOTOS



Living with the Stehekin River in the aftermath of the December 2025 flood

A report by a geomorphologist with experience at the site



2025 flood damage to the Stehekin Road. —PAUL BAKKE PHOTO

The flood of December 11, 2025 was the second largest in the 105-year record of water discharge in the Stehekin River. It is currently estimated to have been 21,500 CFS (cubic feet per second). This was exceeded only by the 26,000 CFS flood of October 20, 2003. The flood has caused much damage to infrastructure (roads, power) and buildings, particularly along the Company Creek Road. As of this writing, part of the river continues to flow through the neighborhood of houses accessed by this road, following a network of old channels on the floodplain that had not been occupied by the river flow for many years, possibly never since modern settlement. The purpose of this report is to give a brief scientific perspective on how mountain rivers, and the Stehekin River in particular, function and change over time.

The author discusses how the segment of the river and valley between the upper end of the Company Creek Road (River Mile 6.5) and the Company Creek alluvial fan (River Mile 4.7) is distinct. This is the area in which a portion of the river flow has changed channels and continues to flood houses and the road.

The author then discusses evidence for why the river is different now than it was 60 years ago. The river is less stable now than it was back then, and appears to be in a period of transition as it adjusts to changes in climate and sediment load.

Finally, the author describes an array of possibilities to respond to the flooding, discussing relative cost, and what the science says about the risk of failure to achieve

CONTINUED ON PAGE 9



2025 flooding from the Stehekin River. —PAUL BAKKE PHOTO

The Stehekin Valley is deep and narrow, sheer cliff walls descending to a bending strip of river plain barely a mile wide. That tiny bit of flat land is, of course, the river's course. It's

also the Stehekin Road's course, and since the road stays and the river doesn't, inevitably the two run into each other every few years in one place or another. Short of channelizing and de-

stroying this wild river—the valley life force—anyone maintaining the road has got to accept that. — TWC, Summer-Fall 2002

Mud and rockslides damage FS road, shut Holden Village

Material drawn from Holden's website by Anne Basye

A series of 11 slides—some that can be easily cleared of mud, boulders, and trees with heavy equipment, and a few that compromised the integrity of Forest Service Road (FSR) 8301—closed Holden Village in December. All guests and staff were helicoptered out. Staff from IMCO, the contractor handling post-remediation water quality testing for the Rio Tinto Mining Company, also were evacuated.

The U. S. Forest Service (USFS) has issued a road closure order for both motorized and nonmotorized travel from the Lucerne commercial dock all the way through Holden Village to the ballfield. Fifteen designated caretakers now in the Village have been granted permission to access the road from Mile Post 9 out to the ballfield and up to the maintenance buildings. The order will be in effect until December 31, 2027 unless rescinded sooner.

The USFS has already filed for Emergency Relief for Federally-Owned Roads (ERFO) funding to



repair the road. The U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) is determining whether funding is available in the annual ERFO allocation. If not, other federal funding avenues will be explored. Assessments, engineering, and plans

are underway but have not been submitted to DOT for approval.

Geotechnical engineers and avalanche experts cite the ongoing threat of slides (land and especially snow) in many of the areas that need engineering assessments and construction. On-the-ground assessments are likely this spring.

Once the federal government has outlined a repairs program, bids and construction can begin, subject to the limitations of FSR 8301's remote location, the short construction season, and potential wildfires. Emergency repairs may establish a 2-track road before the restoration of a roadway suitable for vehicles. Holden Village might then apply to use FSR 8301 for resupply, assuming the road is still closed to the public.

The bottom line: Holden Village will be closed through 2026 and perhaps into 2027.

Living with the Stehekin River

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

goals and the risk of unintended impacts to the river, the habitat and surrounding lands upstream and downstream. None of these actions are certain of restoring the conditions that existed before the flood.

With that in mind, the author hopes to convey understanding that rushing into a costly, high-impact option is imprudent and risky. The Stehekin River deserves to be

treated with careful consideration of what the science says and measured consideration of long-term as well as short-term consequences. I hope that any actions will fully reflect the value of the river and the Stehekin Valley as a place of special beauty and natural wonder in harmony with human presence.

Access the full report at <https://tinyurl.com/CompanyCreek>

Marc Bardsley's 50 years with N3C

A discussion with N3C President Phil Fenner

Current N3C president Phil Fenner and former board member and president Marc Bardsley met recently to talk about Bardsley's long tenure with N3C.

Bardsley first appeared in the pages of *The Wild Cascades* in September 1973, nearly 53 years ago! He had joined N3C in 1968, and in 1974 formed a committee to designate the Boulder River as Wilderness. "Rick McGuire and I and the Zaleskys came up with some rough borders and we went to work," he remembered. "McGuire quit work and went to D.C. and got a job working for congressman Al Swift of Washington's second congressional district. He brought Al out here and took him on a hike. He said, 'I'm not a hiker, I don't really like to hike, but you guys seem okay, I'm going ahead with it, I'll do this for you.' He almost single-handedly got Boulder River Wilderness in 1983. It may not have a big following, but I still love that place."

Boulder River became wilderness as part of the big Washington Wilderness Act of 1984, which also designated Lake Chelan-Sawtooth, Henry M. Jackson, and William O. Douglas Wilderness Areas. Twenty-three years later, in 2007, Bardsley led a campaign to add Wild Sky to Wilderness—23 years after he launched the Boulder River campaign. When Wild Sky became Wilderness in 2008, "you could practically hear the champagne glasses clinking in your President's letter!" said Fenner.

"Yes, that was back in the days when you could actually accomplish something!" Bardsley chuckled. "All you can do now is try to stall bad things off."

Bardsley launched the American Alps campaign in 2008 to try to bring more of the North Cascades into the National Park, but it got some big push-back and ultimately faded away. "But we've had a few defensive wins, commented Fenner. "They didn't dam the North Fork Skykomish River at Sunset Falls, and we saved the Beckler



Marc Bardsley and Phil Fenner of N3C were part of a team collecting seed and planting clippings near Maple Pass to plant in the Joe and Margaret Miller Greenhouse at the Marblemount Ranger Station in 2014. The crew included (L to R) Michael Kirshenbaum and Russ Dalton of Skagit Land Trust, North Cascades Institute graduate student Samantha Hale, Tom Brucker and Marc Bardsley of N3C, North Cascades National Park Volunteer and Youth Program Coordinator Michael Brondi, and Phil Fenner with N3C.

6 parcel via the Trust Land Transfer process."

"We actually did save quite a bit of stuff, but they seem pretty small compared to what the bad guys keep doing," said Bardsley.

Both agreed that without North Cascades National Park, that whole area would be crisscrossed with logging roads and clearcuts. "We'd still be trying to get a little tiny Park up there with roads all over it!" said Bardsley. "I don't even want to think about it."

There were some losses. Bardsley tried to stop the Forest Service for charging a fee to go hiking. "They called it 'Fee Demo', and you said it was horrible to charge people to walk on their own land. But it went ahead," said Fenner. "Maybe worse was the trend towards privatization, you wrote a good presidents' letter on that, and it still looms over the Park."

N3C president for 18 years, from 1994 to spring 2012, Bardsley wrote dozens and dozens of President's Let-

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

Bardsley

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ters for *The Wild Cascades*, often celebrating the people behind N3C's work. Here's an excerpt from Bardsley's President's Letter from Summer 2005. It could have been written today!

There is no doubt that all of us interested in environmental affairs are being overwhelmed by the daily bad news reported in the national media. Not necessarily in order of importance, there are the continued attempts to commercialize public land, global warming, corporate control of the decision-making process, radical judicial appointments, attacks on the Clean Air and Endangered Species Acts, and the squandering of national resources on overlapping wars. The list seems to be endless and we feel more hopeless every day. Is there anything the average person can do about these never-ending assaults on the things we hold of utmost importance? Most of us are not extraordinary. We realistically are not going to change the world by our individual efforts. Other than letters to your congressman and to your editors and by joining and working with groups of like-minded people, I say there is not much we can do as individuals at the national level.

What we can do, though, is to become more active at the local level. The number of down-home issues coming along are increasing, certainly as a trickle-down effect from the disgraceful national political scene. I intend to take out some of my anger and frustration by becoming more aggressive. Those of us in the North Cascades Conservation Council must step forward and show our friends in the green community that some battles can be won.

Welcome North Cascades National Park Service Complex (NOCA) Acting Superintendent Danika Globokar



N3C's first in-person meeting with Acting NOCA Park Superintendent Danika Globokar on February 24 was very congenial. President Phil Fenner and board member Dave Fluharty represented N3C. Our get-acquainted meeting covered topics ranging from N3C concerns about how the National Park Service responds to flood damage in the Stehekin River and elsewhere in NOCA to the need to make progress on the Wilderness Stewardship Management Plan last updated in 1989. In between, plans for summer staffing were touched upon as well as the Settlement Agreement for the Skagit River Project

relicensing, the current Visitor Use Management Plan process, helicopter use in Wilderness, and more. It was a valuable opportunity for N3C to introduce our history of engagement with the North Cascades. We presented Supt. Globokar with a copy of Harvey Manning's book *Wilderness Alps* and recent issues of *The Wild Cascades*.

Supt. Globokar's questions demonstrated that she is eagerly learning about NOCA from its many constituents. She and her staff are dedicating a lot of time to developing the short- and long-term responses to flood damage, especially in the Stehekin Valley. Options for actions are still under discussion and decisions have yet to be made because of funding constraints. The most important, immediate issues for the NPS in Stehekin relate to the mudslide at Stehekin Landing that wiped out the sewage treatment plant. Health and safety issues for residents and visitors revolve around the Stehekin Landing and prioritize NPS responsibilities.

N3C looks forward to working with Globokar and her staff. This initial in-person meeting is a running start to the dialogue.



We happened to see Christian Martin, Communications Director of North Cascades Institute while having lunch next door to the National Park HQ in Sedro Woolley. From L-R, Dave Fluharty and Phil Fenner of N3C and Christian Martin of NCI. NCI recently released its spring flyer of this year's events and course offerings. Subscribe at nccascades.org.

N3C refuses to sign Seattle City Light Settlement Agreement, stakes out long-term vision for the Skagit River. Why?

By David Fluharty

N3C's board of directors voted unanimously to abstain from signing the recently completed Offer of Settlement for Relicensing of the Skagit River Hydroelectric Project, FERC Project No. 553-235, despite having participated in the process over the last eight years.

The reasoning behind this decision relates directly to why N3C was established in 1957 “to

protect and preserve the North Cascades' scenic, scientific, recreational, educational, wildlife, and wilderness values.”

N3C was not around to object to the original construction of the Seattle City Light (SCL) Skagit River Project dams (1919-1956). N3C did object strenuously to raising the reservoir level of Ross Dam (1967-1984) and to construction of dams on Copper

Creek and Thunder Creek. N3C promoted the designation of North Cascades National Park (1968) and settled for the designation of Ross Lake National Recreation Area (RLNRA) for the area occupied by Ross Reservoir as part of the North Cascades National Park Service Complex (NOCA). Thirty five years ago, as an “intervenor” in the relicensing of the Skagit River Project, N3C successfully obtained, among other things, purchase of over 3000 acres of wildlife habitat and the North Cascades Environmental Learning Center (operated by North Cascades Institute) as mitigation for loss of the river and riparian corridor habitat when constructing the Skagit River Project dams, along with river

flow and off-river spawning and rearing channels for salmon.

The current 30-year license expired in April 2025, so SCL is temporarily operating on a “continuing year-to-year” license. The proposed new license period for the Skagit River Project is 50 years. In the next 50 years, who can predict what will happen? N3C does not have a crystal

ball but finds the following trends to be highly likely: 1) costs of renewable energy are likely to fall to the point they undercut even the PNW low hydroelectric cost. Further, 2) the cost of hydroelectric production is likely to increase to replace aging infrastructure and restore ecosystem integrity by eliminating hydroelectric dams (e.g., Elwha and Klamath decisions). 3)

Continued warming of the climate will cause loss of snowpack and glacier-fed runoff, increase stream temperatures for aquatic species like salmon as well as the likelihood of Fall and Winter rain-on-snow events that disturb spawning areas for salmon. In addition, ocean conditions facing salmon survival at sea will continue to worsen with ocean warming, marine heatwaves and changes in marine ecosystem flora and fauna. 4) Pressures on salmon habitat from rising population and consumption will continue to increase; and 5) as N3C hopes, there will be more people who support rewilding areas like the North Cascades by displacing dams, reservoirs and roads, designating transboundary parks and protected areas, and supporting use of forests

to maintain watersheds, sequester carbon, and raise wildlife.

Under the conditions expected, can salmon prove they can navigate the rapids of a free flowing Wild and Scenic Skagit River? Can wildlife find corridors to cross an abandoned North Cross State Highway 20? It is that vision of the future—sometimes nightmarish and sometimes optimistic—that determines N3C position for the next 50 years.

At the N3C Board meeting in February, we discussed the Settlement Agreement and voted not to sign it because:

1. N3C and other Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) were excluded from the Settlement negotiations among tribal, state and federal parties, despite having been engaged in the scoping and study processes. Due to the confidentiality of the negotiations N3C is not privy to any new scientific studies or information or to the compromises made in reaching the Settlement Agreement.

- 2A. The fish passage component of the Settlement Agreement is so large, hugely expensive, and environmentally destructive that it should be assessed as an element of the proposed license and not as an element to be determined later. In my opinion (based on long-term engagement with salmonid recovery studies and science), the Upper Skagit River is a high-risk, low-return option for salmonids. There is continued debate about “how” to achieve this aspirational objective. The Settlement Agreement proposes a trap-and-haul method that would require the construction of a roadway from State Route 20 down to Ross Reservoir, passing through mature forests and over highly unstable geological formations. This

N3C wants to avoid an ambitious fish passage program that founders in a changed climate because we could not see that far ahead, and leaves in its wake an irreversible scar on the landscape.

would create a highly visible scar within North Cascades National Park Service Complex leading to an industrial-scale construction project on the shoreline to build a collection facility for potential juvenile salmon passing downstream. Note that Ross Dam was constructed without such a road. Since the first General Management Plan, N3C has opposed construction of a spur road from SR 20 down to Ross Reservoir.

2B. The proposed Settlement Agreement invests in restoration of the Skagit estuary (\$75 million) and Skagit mainstem (\$75 million) salmon habitat because dam construction and operations have caused damage to the ecosystem and these areas are considered by best available science to provide the most benefit in terms of the cost. However, to be successful SCL must rely on developing robust collaborative processes for determining which projects to fund and the actions should be consistent with Recovery Plans for ESA-listed salmon and the Snohomish County Comprehensive Management Plan.

3. The Settlement Agreement has yet to be assessed for environmental impacts and potential mitigation measures. The Settlement Agreement is a product of negotiation among Parties about what they can accept as measures for Seattle City Light to meet in the next license. The environmental impacts and potential mitigation measures have not been assessed. The Section 7 Consultations required by the Endangered Species Act (ESA) have not been performed for ESA-listed species. If the Seattle City Council approves the Settlement Act, that would trigger the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requirement for the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) to perform an assessment of the environmental impacts of alternatives and the Settlement Agreement. In N3C experience with NEPA, its requirements have resulted in significant improvements in projects proposed for federal permitting actions.

4. The perspectives of the Canadian, British Columbia and First Nations are

not incorporated in the Settlement Agreement. SCL has made modest efforts to invite participation by Canadian interests but has not been able to ensure engagement. In part, that is because FERC does not have jurisdiction in Canada and does not require input. In the past, failure to consult led to the international controversy over raising of Ross Dam. Contrast that effort with the successful trans-boundary engagement that took place when the Skagit River headwaters were threatened recently by mining on Silverdaisy Mountain in British Columbia. Through joint actions by governments, tribes/First Nations, and NGOs, the mineral tenures were extinguished (2022).

5. Signing the Settlement Agreement requires that signers profess to support all elements of the Agreement. Because N3C and others were not at the negotiation table to express our concerns, those concerns have not been addressed. Some elements are unacceptable to our organization (road building, industrial-scale facilities construction, lack of protection of the wilderness character of surrounding lands, proposed dredging of reservoirs, etc.) N3C specifically requested that SCL include in the license a provision for removing construction facilities and fish collection and restoring the shoreline and roadbed should the experimental fish passage in Ross Reservoir prove to be unsuccessful. N3C is hoping that by retaining its interest in these and other elements of the Settlement Agreement, we can improve on the outcomes by participating independently.

6. Despite N3C refusal to sign in support of the Settlement Agreement, N3C is in accord with many of the elements contained in the Settlement Agreement which are also sought by others, e.g., better management of wildlife habitat mitigation lands, changes in lighting to protect the night sky, improved estuarine and mainstem fish habitat, more effective flood control, better protection of cultural resources, better control of visitor access to protect cultural resources and reduce congestion, maintenance

and improvements in campgrounds and other recreation facilities.

Returning to the N3C vision for the future, we predict that 50 years from the start of the license we might be able to see the restoration of the free-flowing Skagit River and that we can rewild the core area now fragmented by highways. N3C wants to avoid an ambitious fish passage program that founders in a changed climate because we could not see that far ahead, and leaves in its wake an irreversible scar on the landscape.

Former N3C president Dave Fluharty holds a PhD in Natural Resources Conservation and Planning from the University of Michigan. He has served as Chair of the NMFS Ecosystem Principles Advisory Committee for NMFS and NOAA Science Advisory Board. He contributed to the NMFS economic technical team assessment of Critical Habitat and assessment of estimation of cost of habitat restoration in the Columbia River basin.

Give the gift of the North Cascades through our Gift Membership Program

Know someone who'd like to be part of N3C? Give them a one-year gift membership. Your designee will get a copy of *The Wilderness Alps* by Harvey Manning as well as three issues of *The Wild Cascades* as they are published. Go to www.northcascades.org and click Join Us, then "Give a Gift Membership." Enter the gift recipient's name and mailing address, then, enter your info under Credit Card Info. We suggest a \$20 donation for a gift membership.

If you have questions, contact us at GiftMember@northcascades.org. If you lack internet access, simply cut out the membership card on page 23, complete your information, write "GIFT" across the top and attach a note with the name and mailing address of the recipient.

Progress on SR 20 Visitor Use Management Plan



N3C is taking part in the Visitor Use Management Planning (VUMP) sessions for North Cascades National Park Service Complex hosted by the National Park Service Denver Service Center. This is a result of “early action” funding we negotiated with Seattle City Light during the relicensing process of the Skagit hydro project. We exchanged a provision in the previous/current license to recoat the power transmission towers in a more compatible color for this Visitor Use planning process because the towers were not going to be recoated anytime soon and meanwhile visitor use in peak seasons is causing impacts that urgently need to be dealt with. From the outset, our goal has been to widen the planning area from the NPS’ territory (Ross Lake NRA) to a wider corridor from at least Rock-

port over to at least Washington Pass. The initial planning meeting included a lot of brainstorming by those present but more ideas are still solicited. What would you like to see as a visitor to the Highway 20 corridor? As we approach the final Plan release, we will be able to report more details. Here is the official NPS public statement, from Rachel H. Collins, Project Manager for Recreation and Visitor Experience, National Park Service Denver Service Center:

Planning for the SR 20 corridor continues to move forward as we refine a longterm vision that improves ontheground conditions, enhances safety, and ensures highquality, accessible visitor experiences across the landscape. Building from the shared purpose and objectives outlined with partners—including addressing congestion, improving parking and trail

access, supporting meaningful Tribal use, and identifying sustainable visitor capacities—we are now entering the next phase of plan development. Following public and partner engagement in 2025, the team is incorporating input into concept development through spring 2026. Public review of a draft plan is anticipated later this year, with final refinements and completion of the plan in early 2027. We appreciate the continued collaboration across Tribes, agencies, gateway communities, and partners as we work toward a resilient set of strategies that support both visitor experiences and resource protection along the full SR 20 corridor.

A Twisp Timeline: The struggle, summarized

First we have some very good news!

On 3/18/26 Center for Biological Diversity (CBD) filed a Notice of Intent to Sue under the Endangered Species Act on the Twisp Restoration Project (TRP), based on the faulty “Letter of Concurrence” issued by USFWS when a full Biological Opinion was clearly warranted based on the size of the project and likely impacts to threatened species and critical habitat. The 60-day notice is mandated in the ESA. CBD calls for immediate resumption of consultation with the Forest Service which would mean implementation (logging) would stop until that is completed.

Also, the Methow Forest Forum (MFF), the group that began the resistance to TRP and Midnight, and has provided N3C with essential help since we became involved, has formed its own non-profit which is pending 501(c)3 status. That means MFF can now accept tax-deductible donations to further their local campaign work. Contact icilybear@gmail.com

To all of our members and advocates for the integrity of the Methow ecosystem, thank you for your support and perseverance!

Now, let's rewind back to the beginning of the story and try to clarify how we got to this point

TWC readers may be understandably confused about the Twisp logging situation, as it's probably the most complex and long-term resistance we've engaged in since the Reagan and Bush II years. This timeline of events is an attempt to clarify our work.

One source of confusion is that the original Twisp Project (the “TRP”) was split in two in 2023, creating a reduced-sized TRP in the lower Twisp River valley, and the new Midnight Project in the upper valley. And keep in mind that when you hear the words restoration (the R in TRP), resilience, and fire associated with these projects



Logging along the Alder Cr. road began before the snow melt. —MICHAEL “BIRD” SHAFFER PHOTO

you are being misled about the projects, as they are driven primarily by timber production targets.

2021

9/27/21: N3C is made aware of the original, large TRP, hires attorney to prepare to sue USFS to stop it, seeking a full EIS.

2022

4/20/22: Forest Service releases Final

Environmental Assessment.

7/13/22: Forest Service releases Decision Notice and Finding of No Significant Impact.

11/23/22: N3C and parties in the Methow file lawsuit to stop TRP.

2023

1/26/23: Forest Service amended the TRP, reducing its size from 77,000

CONTINUED ON PAGE 16

Twisp Timeline

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 15



More logging along Alder Cr, the first phase of the TRP. —MICHAEL “BIRD” SHAFFER PHOTO

to 24,000 acres, all of it outside the upper Twisp River valley. But they did not allow a comment period on the changes and failed to announce that planning for a new “Midnight Project”—which would include all the upper valley areas removed from the original TRP—was ongoing at that time.

2024

1/18/24: District Court in Spokane

upholds TRP.

3/8/24: N3C files appeal of District Court decision in 9th Circuit Court of Appeals.

2025

5/2/25: N3C wins TRP Appeal on 1 out of 3 topics: FS must account for Cumulative Effects of TRP and Midnight, because they are adjacent, overlap in time, and in fact were originally

one project.

7/16/25: N3C offers settlement to USFS to do only “thinning from below” component of TRP this summer, until the Cumulative Effects are analyzed, with monitoring and recourse for cutting any large trees. USFS rejects offer, stating their intention to begin implementation (logging).

10/18/25: FS releases its Cumulative Effects Analysis for the TRP and Midnight as ordered by Court of Appeals. Despite USFS saying they intended to start logging immediately, Fall rains and snows intervened.

2026

2/15/26: Implementation (logging) on TRP begins on Lookout Mountain Road.

2/27/26: Heavy equipment seen moving into Poorman Creek preparing to begin logging.

3/1/26: Logging begins in Poorman Creek drainage. Volunteers begin monitoring for max. diameter trees cut and percent of remaining canopy cover, will document violations.

3/18/26: Center for Biological Diversity (CBD) filed a Notice of Intent to Sue under the Endangered Species Act on the TRP, based on the faulty “Letter of Concurrence” issued by USFWS when a full Biological Opinion was clearly warranted based on the size of the project and likely impacts to threatened species and critical habitat. The 60-day notice is mandated in the ESA. CBD calls for immediate resumption of consultation with the Forest Service which would mean implementation (logging) would stop until that was completed.

Oral Presentation Supporting the Objections to the Midnight Restoration Project

By N3C, Methow Forest Forum, Michael Shaffer, and Ric Bailey, Jan 30, 2026

All of us who submitted this objection have invested a tremendous amount of unpaid personal time trying to work with the Okanogan Wenatchee National Forest influence the Midnight Project. We've attended several tours sponsored by the MVRD, met personally with District leadership and with Forest Supervisor Umphries. We submitted extensive Scoping and Draft EA comments. We offered an alternative that was rejected. We asked to be involved in the process for developing the Proposed Action and were denied, while a special interest group was given preferential access.

We've participated in the Midnight planning process in good faith. Yet virtually none of our suggestions have resulted in any changes, nor have we seen any consideration of new ideas. Our reminders of potential federal law violations have not resulted in any apparent consideration.

Many of Midnight's directives flagrantly defy the Northwest Forest Plan. For example, potential impacts to the northern spotted owl and other listed or sensitive species have literally been brushed aside. The establishment of riparian buffers to protect listed aquatic species, and identification of landslide-prone areas, have been gerrymandered. Incomprehensibly, the EA states that if the LSR Working Group doesn't review and approve Midnight, the Forest will proceed to log LSR's anyway.

The Draft Decision proposes a FONSI when anyone with the slightest knowledge of NEPA knows this finding is arbitrary, capricious, and wildly inappropriate. The EA contains only a single alternative as if there's only one way to solve what the EA describes as serious ecological problems, and as if the public has no ideas, recommendations, or concerns.

The adjacent Twisp and Midnight projects, once a single project, were disconnected so that there is no seamless analysis. There are several

outstanding issues with Twisp, for example, it has been admitted by the OWNF that the riparian buffers in Twisp are not in compliance with the Forest Plan, but there's no indication that adjustments will be made, while logging is proceeding.

The Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals required a cumulative impacts analysis for Twisp and Midnight, but all the Forest did was produce a mass of bureaucratic documents that barely even addressed the particulars of the two Projects. Yet logging resumed immediately after the so-called analysis was released.

In terms of overall validation for Midnight, there is no reason to believe the proposed reconstruction of this ecosystem to meet an arbitrary "desired condition" is anything more than a massive forestry experiment. Its objectives are not based on complete, or accurate information. The description of the historic conditions that will allegedly be restored is based on scant information, representing only frozen points in time in select areas. It assumes a static forest condition over centuries and fails to consider the dynamic nature of forest ecosystems.

The EA speaks of Midnight's economic benefits when in fact the project will damage The Methow Valley rural economy by degrading the recreation resource upon which our outdoor recreation industry depends. There is virtually no economic benefit that can be ascribed. The disturbance that will result from logging operations, including log truck traffic, will impose a substantial threat to the safety and well-being of recreation users and local residents. Yet the EA fails to even address this issue.

Residents of the Methow Valley, and the greater expanse of publics that cherish the Twisp Corridor have not been provided with any viable opportunity to even understand that the project exists, let alone what it will do. They are expected to read an EA

that is not legible to practically anyone other than environmental lawyers and top-level Forest Service employees. There were no public meetings, and only obligatory newspaper notices which were not even placed in the local paper.

The Twisp River Watershed is one of the more precious places in our Methow home. It is a nationally known recreation Mecca, and a biodiversity hot spot. The Forest seems to feel Midnight won't damage anything, but virtually all the laws and rules designed to ensure responsible forest management have been cast aside. Much of the forest in the project area will be drastically changed from mixed conifer with a closed canopy to an open canopy monoculture with even-aged stands of pine.

This is our home. We do not want to see the Methow Watershed relegated to a resource colony to supply far-away sawmills. And that's the 800-pound gorilla in the room. Given all the credible information we've received about the agency's motivation for fuels reduction activities, it seems apparent that Midnight is mostly about meeting timber targets. Yet the Final EA makes no mention of timber supply as a project goal.

In conclusion, the only opportunity we've been left with to influence Midnight is this Objection, and litigation. The Midnight and Twisp projects both need to go back to the drawing board, to initiate a transparent and democratic process that gives full attention to potential ecological and social impacts, and complies with all statutes and regulations.

We request that the OWNF release a Final Decision with a *Finding of Significant Impact*. The Forest should cease all activities on the Twisp Restoration Project. If it wishes to proceed with forest management activities in the Midnight and Twisp Project areas, it should prepare an Environmental Impact Statement. Thank you.

Report of logging along Poorman Creek

By Ric Bailey



Fresh log deck along Poorman Cr. road. —RIC BAILEY PHOTO

I drove up Poorman Creek Road March 18. Did not drive up the old road that goes east from the main Poorman Road at the National Forest boundary. Only went three miles, there could be more activity further up.

These are my observations, with some photos. The logging shown in the photos is between one and three miles up the main road from the national forest boundary.

The first observation relates to canopy cover. There is no question that in all logging units, canopy cover has been reduced to well below 20 percent depending on plot area. To determine whether the cover was 50 percent or greater prior to the logging, a look at the drone photos is necessary. My recollections are that it was

definitely greater than 50 percent prior to the logging, which is validated by looking at the stumps that remain.

The slope aspect in the areas that have been logged is south-east-facing. Generally, tree cover is likely to be dense on the lower part of slopes, thinning out moving upslope. In the logged units, the logging has ruined the even transition from timbered slope to grassy slope.

The rest of these observations are not exactly pertinent to the Twisp lawsuit, but still important from a habitat perspective.

The Douglas fir trees in the logged areas have been all but wiped out, as expected. I found only a few straggling fir trees left standing amid the ponderosa pines that have been left.

The ponderosas that have been left are now extremely vulnerable to blow-down due to the loss of an uneven canopy that deflects wind. A recent blowdown event has knocked down several snags in the areas that remain unlogged.

There were many trees in the log decks that appeared to be greater than 21 inches diameter, but forgot my tape measure.

There were also a few ponderosas in the log decks, generally 10-14 inches diameter.

There has been no snag retention in the logging units.

The logging units appear to be observing a 300-foot buffer from the stream. The only logging on the

southeast side of the road is in areas that appear to be 300 feet from the stream.

The road is a mud bath. It is irresponsible to allow logging to occur during a high runoff event such as we are now experiencing (it was 70 degrees the past two days) in the area. (They must be in a hurry—) There is muddy runoff traveling down the road, which of course winds up in the creek eventually, though I didn't observe any torrents running off the road downslope toward the creek.

My general observation in terms of fuels reduction as it pertains to wildfire spread and intensity is that this logging show will do virtually nothing to reduce wildfire risk. There is profuse logging slash, which is now exposed to direct sunlight, whereas before ground fuels were light and moisture-retaining—making contact with mineral soil under a much denser canopy. The slash that remains was likely left to reduce disturbance to soil from the logging equipment, and will probably be piled and burned at some point. But the mass of flashy fuels like twigs and needles will remain, and will be dried out, except in the unlikely event prescribed burning occurs (I do not recall any prescription for pile or broadcast burning after logging in these units).

Editorial Comment: This logging prescription is identical to what they used to call "shelterwood cuts." This practice was supposedly discontinued years ago. It illustrates the lack of wisdom in buying into the recent "protect old-growth forest movement." We need to protect forest ecosystems, not just save big trees.

This story was originally published by Columbia Insight, a nonprofit, environmental news website covering the Pacific Northwest based in Hood River, Oregon. N3C board member Kathy Johnson is a source.

A new plan is afoot to log Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest

By Nick Engelfried, *Columbia Insight*. March 12, 2026

Would you give timber companies carte blanche to log one of the largest national forests in the country in the name of “forest health”?

That’s what critics of a new “forest thinning” plan are warning could happen in Washington’s Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest.

Also one of the most visited national forests in the country, Mount Baker-Snoqualmie covers 1.72 million acres on the western flank of Washington’s Cascade Range. From the border with British Columbia, it skirts North Cascades National Park, stretching almost continuously for 140 miles across parts of five counties and ending at the northern edge of Mount Rainier National Park. It contains more than 50 campgrounds, over 1,500 miles of trails and some of the most remote wild spaces in the Pacific Northwest.

Now it’s the site of a proposed forest-thinning project that conservation groups fear could give a green light to logging over a vast but loosely defined area.

“Never before have we seen a logging project of this scale in Mount Baker-Snoqualmie,” says Donald Parks, a volunteer organizer working on national forest issues for the Washington Sierra Club. “It’s unprecedented for this region.”

The official goals of the proposal, known as the Mount Baker-Snoqualmie Forestwide Thinning Project, are to increase the diversity of tree stands, create threatened species habitat over the long-term and contribute to a “viable timber industry” in Western Washington.

Critics worry it will open the door for logging young to moderate-aged trees with limited scrutiny.

The stakes are high, because Mount



Forest in the S. Fk. Stillaguamish project area prior to thinning. —KATHY JOHNSON PHOTO

Baker-Snoqualmie is a locus for both recreation and wildlife habitat.

It’s home to old-growth-dependent threatened species like northern spotted owls and marbled murrelets, and streams that support imperiled salmon. Extensive protected areas and heavy winter snowfall make the forest a valuable part of Washington’s outdoor recreation economy.

“Mount Baker-Snoqualmie benefits local businesses that depend on tourism and recreation,” says Amy Mower, another Washington Sierra Club volunteer. “It’s a multi-use forest.”

Federal officials have ushered the thinning project through the environmental review process at high speed. Instead of a full environmental impact statement, which involves extensive evaluation of the project’s possible consequences for wildlife, cultural

resources and ecosystems, the Forest Service released a less detailed environmental assessment (EA) as the holidays got underway in December.

The public had 30 days to submit comments.

If all goes according to plan, logging could start as soon as June.

“This thinning proposal is flawed, partly because it lacks detail,” says Mower. “And there hasn’t been adequate opportunity for the public to make meaningful comment.”

“You don’t know what they’re going to do.”

The Forestwide Thinning Plan will target areas of the Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest that were logged decades ago and replanted, mostly with Douglas-fir that grew back in dense stands.

In theory, selectively logging small trees from this type of landscape helps create a more open, diverse forest structure that eventually leads to improved wildlife habitat.

Critics say this isn’t what the Forest Service has in store for Mount Baker-Snoqualmie.

“Thinning really dense forests, where some smaller trees are cut and larger trees left behind, isn’t necessarily a bad thing,” says Kathy Johnson of the Pilchuck Audubon Society. “But this is designed to be a commercially viable harvest. That means taking bigger trees.”

The Environmental Assessment specifically lists supporting the local timber industry as a reason for thinning.

“This project can play an important role in supporting local mills, family wage jobs and rural communities by

CONTINUED ON PAGE 20

contributing to a sustainable supply of wood while advancing broader restoration goals,” says Nick Smith of the American Forest Resource Council.

The EA doesn’t specify areas to be logged. Instead, it relies on an approach called “condition-based management,” which sets criteria for identifying trees to harvest at any given time based on size, age and stand type.

The Forest Service says condition-based management will foster a flexible approach to logging, which is important given the full thinning project will take decades to complete.

Condition-based management “avoids pre-mapping every thinning unit years in advance,” Michael Schlafmann, a public affairs officer for Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest, told *Columbia Insight* in an email. “In past projects, fine-scale maps often became outdated before implementation because on-the-ground conditions changed.”

The lack of specificity worries some in the environmental community.

“It’s impossible to conduct an adequate environmental analysis under this approach,” says Johnson. “You don’t know what they’re actually going to do.”

At a time when wildfires supercharged by climate change have become a major public concern it’s common to assume forest thinning is about reducing fire risk.

However, fuel reduction isn’t listed as a major goal of the Mount Baker-Snoqualmie Forestwide Thinning Project.

“This thinning is not being proposed specifically for fire treatment,” says Mower. “It’s for encouraging better growth of harvestable trees.”

Critics worry the project could even make out-of-control fires more likely.

“They’re not talking about cutting a few trees and leaving an intact canopy,” says Johnson. “They want to create big openings, which allow sun to warm the forest floor and wind to dry

it by reducing humidity. Those conditions increase fire risk.”

Wildlife concerns, lack of oversight

Under the plan, logging would be limited to stands of trees under 80 years old. That’s well short of old-growth, which in Western Washington generally means trees dating to the mid-1800s.

Even so, it could impact old-growth-dependent species like spotted owls, which are known to hunt for prey in younger stands.

Noise from logging operations can disturb nesting marbled murrelets in nearby old-growth. Restricting logging to hours when the threatened birds aren’t likely to be present can help reduce this impact, but this depends on effective enforcement by a chronically understaffed and underfunded Forest Service.

“I anticipate there won’t be much enforcement, given severe staff reductions under the current administration,” says Johnson. “And even before that happened, we’ve seen other projects with similar restrictions where those guidelines were flaunted.”

The Northwest Forest Plan, a set of policies established to protect threatened species while allowing some logging on public lands, restricts harvesting of trees affected by the Forestwide Thinning Project to those 20 inches or less in diameter. The EA proposes increasing this to 26 inches.

“It doesn’t sound like a big difference, but at twenty-six inches you’re getting up to some pretty big trees,” says Johnson. “They’re the trees that will provide structure for the forest and create logs that are valuable wildlife habitat when they fall down.”

Logging would also affect the 2.5 million people who use the Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest for recreation every year. These include hikers and backpackers, as well as recreational vehicle drivers who fear logging activity will interfere with access to existing roads.

“Motorized users are disproportionately affected by haul closures, temporary road construction, decommissioning and access restrictions,” wrote

Nichol Phillips of the Pacific Northwest Four Wheel Drive Association, in an official public comment criticizing the thinning plan.

Fraying protections

Forests on the west side of the Cascades are among the most carefully managed in the United States thanks to a patchwork of protections meant to safeguard wildlife habitat. These include the Northwest Forest Plan, the Forest Plan for Mount Baker-Snoqualmie and the Roadless Rule, which limits new road construction across national forests.

“Our work continues to rely on the best available science and must comply with the Forest Plan, the Northwest Forest Plan and our Endangered Species Act consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and NOAA Fisheries,” says Forest Service spokesperson Schlafmann.

Many of these protections, however, are in danger of being weakened or repealed.

The Trump administration has announced its intent to revise the Northwest Forest Plan, proposed rescinding the Roadless Rule and slashed funding for agencies that enforce the Endangered Species Act.

Some parts of Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest, such as its eight congressionally designated Wilderness Areas, will remain legally protected even if all these rollbacks are finalized. But large, additional areas could be opened to logging.

It’s against this backdrop that environmental groups are expressing fears.

“Mount Baker-Snoqualmie draws a great many people from throughout the region because of its beauty and wildness,” Mower says. “We’re lucky it’s the way it is.”

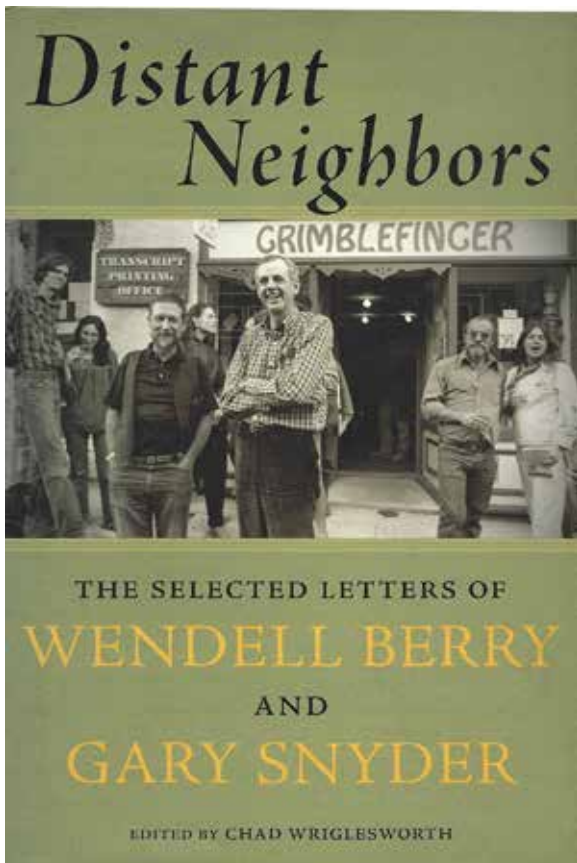
Columbia Insight contributing editor Nick Engelfried is a freelance journalist based in Bellingham, Washington. He writes about environmental issues, climate politics and grassroots movements for social change. His work has appeared in *Waging Nonviolence*, *In These Times*, *1889 Magazine* and elsewhere.

BOOK REVIEW

Distant Neighbors: The Selected Letters of Wendell Berry and Gary Snyder

Edited by Chad Wriglesworth, Counterpoint Books

Reviewed by Dave Flaherty



Counterculture and nature writers have an enduring relationship with their readers and currently seem to be enjoying a certain renaissance. Like with old music bands—a certain nostalgia for simpler lives and times. Thus, it is useful to review a book I just now found prominently displayed in the bookstore that came out 12 years ago featuring an exchange of letters between Wendell Berry and Gary Snyder. Wendell Berry is widely known for his fifty novels, non-fiction, poetry books like *Home Economics* and *Preserving Wilderness* as well as his writing as a Kentucky small farmer. Gary Snyder

was born and grew up near Bellingham, worked as a logger, and spent a summer as the lookout on Crater Mountain in the North Cascades. He spent formative years in Japan studying Zen Buddhism and Asian cultures. Snyder's prose and poetry about the Pacific Northwest found sprinkled throughout his many books have always been an attraction for me, for example in *Danger on Peaks*, and *Mounatins and Rivers Without End*. His *Turtle Island* is a classic of American environmental writing.

Editor Chad Wriglesworth got the brilliant idea to collect and select the 250 letters exchanged by Berry and Snyder over the forty years between 1973 and 2013.

In and of itself, the exchange is an impressive example of persistence by pen pals, but as you might imagine, the predominant themes are prosaic—like reading a diary but with only occasional surprises. Much of the mutual relationship and intellectual stimulation is only hinted. Wriglesworth's introduction was invaluable for me because it reveals the major themes and their significance to readers and how the letter writers bounce off each other on and off the pages of the letters. I have to admit that I find reading their original works more satisfying and coherent than trying to piece to-

gether and understanding from the letters themselves.

Trust me, unless you are an English major you will enjoy Wendell Berry and Gary Snyder's books independently and in their original formats more than you will enjoy struggling through *Distant Neighbors*. The letters do not reveal much because the authors are so gentle, thoughtful and respectful of each other and they seem to agree easily and disagree without rancor. I tried to think of a forty-year exchange of letters between other American environmental writers like Terry Tempest Williams and Edward Abbey. Now there would be entertainment – sparks would fly and invective abound!

*Berry and Snyder
exchanged 250 letters
over 40 years, an
impressive example of
persistence by pen pals*

BOOK REVIEW

Discoveries of a Lifetime

Bruce Barnbaum, Silvergrain Classics

Reviewed by David Fluharty



Photographer and instructor Bruce Barnbaum is a former member of the N3C Board. He has published six previous books of photographs as well as other texts. Now he has completed what he terms his “magnum opus”. *Discoveries of a Lifetime* is a magnificent crowning achievement. The 153 black and white images selected for this volume were taken over the span of Barnbaum’s career. None of these photographs has appeared in earlier books or in gallery shows. A unique feature is the way Barnbaum provides extended captions for each image covering the location, the artist’s motivation for taking the photograph and the significance of the subject as a valuable element of the natural world. The images are interspersed with

essays on the philosophy of being a photographer as well as technical tips on photography. As the author describes the volume, “It’s a large book: 12x12 in size and weighing six pounds with 384 pages. (If you don’t like the book, you can still use it for weight training!)”.

In my opinion, Barnbaum’s self-deprecating humor is not justified—you will like this book. It is printed in Germany by the acclaimed “finest printing press in the world” Silvergrain Classics, an independent publisher. The enforced time indoors during Covid gave Barnbaum the opportunity to review the 15,000 4x5 negatives taken over his more than 50-year career. The early photographs remind us of his contemporaries and teachers Ansel Adams, Brett Weston and Ray McSavaney but most are from the multiple inspirations and direc-

tions chosen in his career—especially his fascination with abstract images.

It is interesting to know that Barnbaum says that “he pays no regard to photography’s rules....He makes a picture by sensing that it looks good, but always with confidence that he can translate what he is seeing photographically on to the negative and then on to paper....” (Michael Pritchard, author of the Foreword). Perhaps it is this innate creativity that prompted Barnbaum to leave his promising academic career in mathematics and physics in the rearview mirror and to switch to the uncertainties of career photography. *Discoveries of a Lifetime* is a testament to Barnbaum having made the right choice.

Bruce Barnbaum’s book can be purchased here: <https://tinyurl.com/BarnbaumBook>

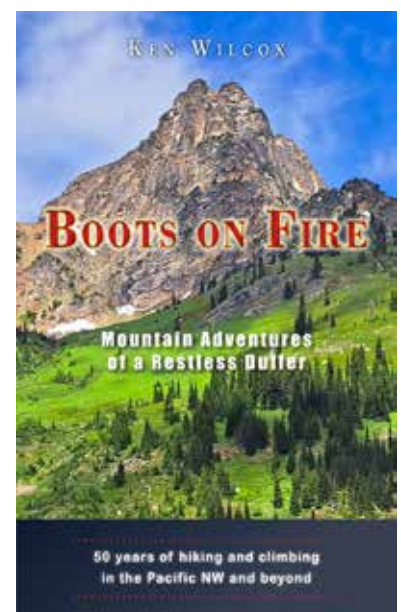
In Boots on Fire, lifelong trailster, N3C advisor, mountaineer and guidebook author Ken Wilcox sums up five decades and thousands of miles of adventuring across the wildlands of North America. Through stories that range from the whimsical and hilarious to serious and inspiring, Ken leads us from Alaska to Mexico, along the coasts, across the Mojave and Sonoran Deserts, into the red rock canyons, and aloft to some of the most beautiful summits of the Cascades, Olympics, Sierras, Rockies and Appalachian Mountains.

Nervous encounters with storms, bears, rattlesnakes, gravity and the unpredictable hazards of having way too much fun run parallel to the friendships, thrills, disappointments and hard successes of hiking and climbing that many dedicated mountain duffers can relate to.

Through it all, Ken reminds us what makes the endless trail or a dramatic peak so alluring, and why we should do everything we can to save our planet’s ever-shrinking wildlands.

So please, pull up a chair and travel along!

Available for \$21.15 from <https://tiredogspress.com/>





Reliably gregarious, a Canada jay brightens a cross-country skier's afternoon above White Salmon Creek. —JIM SCARBOROUGH PHOTO



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Liberty Bell Mtn, seen edge-on from the turnoff to the Washington Pass overlook, after a fresh dusting of snow. —PHIL FENNER PHOTO