

VOICE of the WILD OLYMPICS

Olympic Park Associates

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Return of the Fisher! Reintroduction Proposed in Olympic's Forests

The fisher, a small, reclusive hunter in the old-growth forest, is poised to make a return to the Northwest. Olympic National Park and the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) are taking the first steps toward restoring fishers to the Olympic ecosystem.

In 2004 WDFW completed a feasibility study for reintroducing fishers to Washington that makes a strong case for restoring them to the Olympics. In January Olympic National Park began work on a joint environmental assessment. A draft will be issued later this year.

Along with wolves, fishers were extirpated from Olympic's forests during the past century. Returning fishers will restore a critical native predator to a spectacular forest ecosystem.

By Bruce Moorhead

Bruce Moorhead is an OPA trustee and retired wildlife biologist in Olympic National Park.

A remarkable opportunity exists to restore a key predator to the old-growth forests of the Olympic Peninsula. In January, Olympic National Park and the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) announced plans to reintroduce the fisher (*Martes pennanti*) to the Olympic Peninsula. Selected locations include lower and middle elevation forests of the Bogachiel, Hoh and Queets river drainages in Olympic National Park and Olympic National Forest.

The fisher, a member of the weasel family, is a stocky, darkly furred animal about 30-40 inches in length with a long bushy tail. It is rarely seen by humans because it tends to be nocturnal, prefers dense forests, and seldom travels across open areas. Unlike the closely related river otter, it does not "fish" for a living but is an agile tree climber and preys on small to mid-sized mammals like squirrels, snowshoe hares, mountain beavers, wood rats and mice, as well as birds.

Home range estimates for fishers in the western U.S. (obtained by radio-tracking) are less than 10 square miles for females. Males roam over a larger area. Tree cavities and nests in living trees are often used as dens and rest sites, and fishers often hunt in tree canopies for squirrels and other prey.

Late in the 19th century, fishers occurred rather widely although not abundantly in the Pacific Northwest. At the turn of the last century, their fur pelts were exceeded in value only by the sea otter and sold for up to \$150. Easily captured in traps, they were subject to overtrapping and soon disappeared from a number of U.S. states.



Photo courtesy of the Pacific Biodiversity Institute.

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OPA Board Meetings:

Next: Wednesday, March 22; Wednesday May 24, 2006.
Time: 6:00 p.m.
Place: Kingston Community Center
Please join us. OPA members are always welcome at Board meetings.
The regular OPA Board meetings are in the Kingston Community Center on the 4th Wednesday of odd-numbered months, except for Thanksgiving, and no meeting in July.

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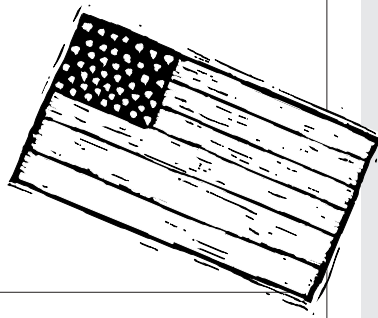
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Phone (DC): 202-224-2621
 Fax: 202-224-0238
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 E-Mail: maria_cantwell@cantwell.senate.gov



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 308 Cannon House Office Building
 Phone (D.C.): 202-225-6311
 FAX 202-226-1606
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 Web: www.house.gov/inslee

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 1721 Longworth HOB
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Return of the Fisher Proposed in Olympic National Park

Continued from P. 1

During the 20th century, the fisher population in Washington and other Northwest states declined steadily but quietly as mature forests were logged and fragmented. Despite the closure of trapping in 1934 in Washington the population has not recovered.

On the Olympic Peninsula, fishers were still rather common in some of the large west-side valleys during the first quarter of the 20th century. Interviews with early fur trappers by mammalogist Victor Scheffer¹ in the 1930s indicated that 37 and 20 fishers were trapped, respectively, in the Queets and Quinault river valleys in the winters of 1920 and 1921. During this same period wolves were also actively trapped and poisoned by homesteaders here, which may also have hastened the fisher's decline.

Despite creation of Olympic National Park and its large Wilderness Area, by the end of the 20th century the fisher had essentially disappeared from Washington. The last confirmed record of a fisher is in 1969 at Lilliwaup Swamp along the eastern side of the Peninsula near the Hood Canal.

The current proposal to reintroduce fishers grew out of statewide attempts during the 1980s and '90s by the WDFW and federal agency scientists to assess the presence and status of the animal across Washington. Despite extensive survey efforts, less than four reliable sightings have been obtained

in recent years, and no incidental captures by trappers, suggesting rather clearly that fishers are very rare and may already have been extirpated in the state. Any animals that do remain, in any case, are no longer likely to be part of a viably reproducing population, and may soon become extinct unless attempts are made to reintroduce the animal.

These findings led Washington to declare the fisher an endangered species in 1998 (although it is not federally listed) and to begin planning for a recovery program. Reintroduction attempts in 15 other U.S. states and five Canadian provinces have generally been successful.

In order to design an effective reintroduction strategy in Washington, the WDFW has recently completed a Geographic Information System (GIS) analysis of suitable habitats and reintroduction locations throughout the state. The largest block of contiguous old-growth forest habitat in the state was found to be along the western side of Olympic National Park and adjoining forest reserves in Olympic National Forest.¹

The most promising habitats in the park have a high canopy closure, multiple canopies, varied shrubs, and a diverse prey base. Suitable fisher habitat also has large-diameter trees, large snags, tree cavities, and logs suitable for denning and rest sites. Fisher habitats are limited at higher elevations by

wet heavy winter snow, which reduces hunting success.

The proposal calls for releasing 60-100 animals over a period of years, along with intensive follow-up monitoring of their survival, movements, and reproduction after release. The prospect for success here is enhanced by the protection offered by the national park. The nearest available source populations of fishers with similar genetic characteristics are in British Columbia and western Alberta.

Altogether, this is a remarkable opportunity to bring back an important natural predator to the magnificent Olympic rain forests, and one of the most encouraging and hopeful prospects in the years ahead for the park. Like the Elwha River salmon restoration, it will restore a vital component in the natural processes of the Pacific Northwest ecosystem and further enrich its prospects and future benefits for us all in years ahead.

¹Scheffer, Victor B. 1995. *Mammals of the Olympic National Park and vicinity*. **Northwest Fauna**, No. 2, p. 90.

²**Feasibility Assessment for Reintroducing Fishers to Washington**. **Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife and Northwest Ecosystem Alliance**, September 2004. <wdfw.wa.gov/wlm/research/papers/fisher/fisher_reintroduction_assessment.htm>

To voice your support for fisher reintroduction, and to get on the mailing list for the forthcoming environmental assessment, write:
 Superintendent — Fisher Reintroduction
 Olympic National Park
 600 East Park Avenue
 Port Angeles, WA 98362

or email: olym_ea@nps.gov

To view the WDFW feasibility study on fisher reintroduction, visit: wdfw.wa.gov/wlm/research/papers/fisher/fisher_reintroduction_assessment.htm

Turn to Pages 4 through 7 to learn more about the fisher.

Return of the Fisher

By Tim McNulty

Excerpted with permission from the November 2001 issue of *Forest Magazine*. Since this article appeared in 2001, a feasibility study has been completed and work has begun on an environmental assessment on returning fishers to Olympic National Park.



Photo from Mass. Dept. of Fish & Wildlife.

A wood pewee breaks the silence of a warm June morning as I follow T. J. Catton down a forest slope in the Rogue River National Forest in southwest Oregon. Catton, a U.S. Forest Service wildlife researcher, stops midslope and homes in on his target with a handheld radio receiver. “She’s within a hundred feet,” he tells me, then climbs atop a large log for a clearer view.

The forest below us is undisturbed, an open, mixed-conifer stand of large Douglas-fir, white fir, sugar pine and the cinnamon-barked trunks of incense cedar. The steep slope bristles with standing snags and the ground is littered with fallen trees.

“There,” Catton whispers, pointing to a large Douglas-fir snag eighty feet below us. I see a quick flash of dark eyes, and low, rounded ears peek around the tree. Then the lithe, catlike shape of a fisher walks unhurriedly out a mossy limb into full sunlight. Within seconds, she leaps gracefully to the limbs of a nearby hemlock and disappears. She is a beautiful animal. Sunlight glistens over the deep brown-black fur of her shoulders and back. Her short legs and long, slender body mark her as a member of the weasel family, larger and darker than a pine marten, with a longer, stouter tail.

The fisher (*Martes pennanti*) has become extremely rare in West Coast forests. So rare, in fact, that biologists consider them extirpated from most of their Pacific range. But an ambitious research project is bringing these elusive hunters into the light.

Fishers are solitary, some would say secretive, hunters of deep forests. At one time, they held almost mythical renown for their prowess as predators on the ground or in the limbs of trees. “The marten can overtake the nimble red squirrel,” wrote Victor Cahalane in his 1947 classic, *Mammals of North America*, “but the fisher can overtake the marten.”

Fishers are consummate predators in mature forests, quick and efficient hunters of snowshoe hares, squirrels, small mammals and a variety of birds including jays, flickers and woodpeckers. As top-level carnivores, their effect on the forest ecosystem is profound. Fishers are the only predators that seek out and effectively hunt porcupines. They also feed on deer and elk carcasses, but their name is a misnomer: fishers do not fish.

Fishers once hunted the unbroken forests of North America from the Smoky Mountains in the Southeast to the pine and hardwood forests of New England and the Great Lakes states, across Canada to the vast conifer forests of British Columbia and south along the West Coast as far as the Siskiyou and southern Sierra Nevada.

They made use of a wide range of forest types, denning in snags and hollow logs and resting on broad limbs and mistletoe brooms in the canopy. They were found at low and middle elevations (deep snow hampers their effectiveness as hunters). But fishers were never plentiful; they have the lowest population density of any terrestrial carnivores of their size.

Their fur, often compared to Russian sable, was prized for its deep luster. Through the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, fishers were trapped relentlessly. Intense trapping was followed by widespread logging of the animals’ habitats. Farms and residential developments replaced forests, and predator elimination programs took a severe toll. By the 1940s fishers had been eliminated from most of their range in the United States.

With the help of early trapping regulations, the abandonment of farms and the return of forests to the Northeast, eastern fishers rebounded. Populations were also assisted by reintroductions. Fishers’ taste for porcupines put them in good standing with timber companies whose young plantations are frequently cropped by the spiny herbivores. Fishers were reintroduced to the northern Rockies, Michigan, Canada and parts of the Northeast largely by timber companies to control porcupine numbers.

Currently, the animals range across Canada, New England, the Adirondacks and the northern portions of Wisconsin and Minnesota. They also occur in the Clearwater region of northern Idaho. But despite more than sixty years of protection, they are found in only three small, isolated populations on the West Coast: the southern Sierra, the Klamath-Siskiyou region of the Oregon-California border and here, along the upper Rogue River in Oregon’s southern Cascades.

The fisher we just spotted is one of nearly two dozen that have been radio collared over the course of a five-year

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Return of the Fisher

Continued from P. 4.

study conducted by the U.S. Forest Service's research station in Olympia, Washington. Their movements, feeding and denning habits and reproductive success are closely monitored. This small population was reintroduced to the area in the late 1970s. What Catton and his fellow researchers are learning about the animals' use of their mixed-forest habitat will be invaluable for restoration of these little-known carnivores to their former Pacific range.

Keith Aubry is a research scientist with the Forest Service's research station in Olympia. He and wildlife biologist Cathy Raley direct the southern Oregon study. Aubry began surveying for fishers in western Washington in the late 1980s, and he has researched the record of fisher trappings and sightings in the state over the past century. His conclusion: fishers are extirpated statewide.

"I'd be hard-pressed to be convinced otherwise," he admits. "When you look at the Washington status report for fisher, there's not one single record by proven survey techniques."

Aubry began his Oregon study in 1995. A consortium of timber companies released fishers into the southern Oregon Cascades area from British Columbia between 1977 and 1981. None of the animals were radio collared or tagged for study.

"What interested me about this population was that they were introduced into an intensively managed landscape," Aubry says. "By studying the animals' habitat selection for den and rest sites in the forest, it gives us tremendous insights into how we might reintroduce fishers into other parts of their range."

Aubry points out that the mixed-conifer forests of southern Oregon were not clear-cut in the Northwest fashion but logged selectively. The result is an abundance of what biologists call "residual structure": large snags, downed trees and large live trees pocked with woodpecker cavities.

"We're finding fishers using all these structures," Aubry reports. "That's why they have reestablished so well."

In an old-growth forest a few miles west of Crater Lake National Park, Cathy Raley points to a natal den in a large incense cedar. About thirty feet up the tree is a small pileated woodpecker hole where a collared female gave birth to a kit. Raley shows another natal den in a white pine snag not far away.

"Natal dens are a critical habitat element," she explains. "The kits are born blind and naked, and they need a lot of protection." Entrance holes are small and allow females, but not males, which are twice their size, to pass. Further, den trees require heartwood decay, something rarely found in younger forests.

In eight weeks, kits are weaned and mobile but still dependent on their mothers for food. At that point, they are moved to a maternal den, generally a low cavity or hollow

log on the forest floor, and will remain there for the next few months.

In five years, researchers have trapped and radio collared twenty-two fishers in the Oregon study. They located and described ten natal dens, nineteen maternal dens and more than 600 rest sites. Two-thirds of dens, one-half of rest sites and one-third of locations actively used by fishers were in "unmanaged" or old-growth forests. Raley and I also visited some heavily logged Boise Cascade land known to be used for foraging by a couple of males, but she says, "No adult reproductive females have been found in logged second growth."

Aubry and Raley will analyze their findings over the next year. Aubry is also working closely with biologists from Washington's Department of Fish and Wildlife to begin early planning for a possible reintroduction of fishers to Washington. It's a lengthy process. Biologists will need to assess existing habitats to find which forest areas have recovered from early-twentieth century logging, a huge effort. They also have to design a radio-telemetry study for monitoring introduced animals. Then there's the question of obtaining animals for reintroduction.

"Ten years ago, I was against reintroduction," Aubry tells me. "I didn't think we had worked hard enough to determine whether fishers were extirpated from Washington." He didn't want to introduce genetic stock from outside the state until he had a better read on local populations. After a decade of surveys, he's convinced. There are no remnant populations to protect.

Under the best circumstances, returning fishers to Washington is still two or three years out. But Aubry remains optimistic about recovering fishers because it worked so well in Oregon. "Given the right forest conditions, there's no reason to believe fishers couldn't be restored throughout the Northwest."

Once they are, we will be an important step closer to returning our forests to ecological wholeness. As one biologist points out, "Top-level carnivores tend to have a big influence on ecosystems. Without the fisher, that role is missing from West Coast forests."



MassWildlife

Questions & Answers:

The Proposed Reintroduction of Fishers to Olympic National Park

Prepared by Olympic National Park and Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. Photos by Massachusetts Dept. of Fish & Wildlife.

What is a fisher?

Weighing about as much as a house cat (between 4.5 and 12 pounds), the fisher's long, lean body makes it easily recognizable as a member of the weasel family, which also includes mink, otter and marten. Fishers are between 2.5 and 3.5 feet long, including their long bushy tails that make up about a third of their total length. They have thick, dark brown coats with some lighter grizzling on the head and back of the neck.

Fishers are nocturnal and are active throughout the year, both on the ground and foraging and resting in trees. Fishers are solitary except during their breeding and denning seasons.

Where do fishers live?

Fishers are found only in North America. Historically, they ranged throughout most of the forests of Canada and the northern U.S. including Washington, and south along the Rockies, Appalachians and Pacific Coast Range. Over-trapping and habitat loss decreased the fisher's range and by the 1930s they had been nearly eliminated from the United States. Reintroductions have successfully restored fishers to Oregon, Idaho, Montana and Alberta, along with the northeastern U.S.

Fishers are creatures of the forest and depend on large trees with cavities, along with large snags and downed logs to provide essential den and rest sites. These key structural features are typically found in mature forests, but are often absent or scarce in managed second-growth forests. Fishers tend to avoid open areas such as fields, recently logged areas and roads.



What do fishers eat?

Fishers are carnivorous, feeding primarily on small and mid-sized mammals such as snowshoe hares, squirrels, mountain beavers, mice, birds, and even porcupines, always appreciated by foresters frustrated by porcupine damage to commercial timber. Fishers also eat other foods, including insects, fruit, fungi and winter-kill deer and elk.

Why did fishers disappear from Washington?

Two major factors contributed to the fisher's disappearance from Washington – intensive trapping during the 1800s and early 1900s, and loss of the fisher's forested habitat.

Around the turn of the century, fisher pelts were second in value only to sea otter pelts, selling for as much as \$150 each. Easily caught in traps, fishers were vulnerable to exploitation, and by the 1930s had disappeared from a number of states. While trapping prohibitions were instituted in many western states, they did not result in fisher recovery. In Washington, the trapping season was closed in 1934. Despite this protection, the fisher has not recovered in the state.

Extensive harvest of old growth forest reduced and fragmented fisher habitat in Washington and worsened the population decline already caused by over-trapping. Today, there are only a few locations in the state where large tracts of suitable habitat still exist. These include the Olympic Peninsula and portions of the Washington Cascades.

Indiscriminant predator and pest control campaigns, incidental capture in traps set for other species, and poaching also contributed to the fisher's disappearance in the state.

Are fishers on the Endangered Species List?

The fisher was listed as a state endangered species by the Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission in 1998. The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) is developing a recovery plan for the species, which will be undergoing public review in early 2006.

The fisher is not listed as a threatened or endangered species under the federal Endangered Species Act but was desig-

nated by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as a candidate for listing in 2004. Reintroduction of fishers may help prevent the listing of this animal as federally threatened or endangered.

Why are you thinking of reintroducing fishers?

Reintroducing these native carnivores will help restore ecosystem functions by reestablishing a member of the predator community and restoring a balance between native predator and prey species. A goal of the National Park Service is to preserve and restore native animals and processes; reintroducing fishers to Olympic National Park would be a step towards that.

The only way to restore the state-endangered fisher to Washington is to bring animals from other areas and release them into suitable habitat. There are no populations of fisher close enough to Washington to reestablish on themselves. If successful, this effort would lead to removal of the species from the state's endangered species list and restoration of one of Washington's native species. The WDFW completed the Feasibility Assessment for Reintroducing Fishers to Washington in 2004; this document found that fisher reintroduction could be successful on the Olympic Peninsula.

Who's involved in this project?

The WDFW and the National Park Service (NPS) with cooperation of the Olympic National Forest.

Why the Olympic Peninsula?

The WDFW Feasibility Assessment concluded that Olympic National Park, together with surrounding Olympic National Forest lands on the western Olympic Peninsula, was the best location for the first fisher reintroduction in Washington. Key factors that contributed to this conclusion include the amount of suitable fisher habi-

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Questions & Answers

Continued from P. 6.

tat that is protected within the park and the Late Successional Reserves already established within Olympic National Forest.

How do you know that there aren't fishers here already?

Extensive surveys conducted from 1990-97 and 2001-04 failed to find any fishers. There have been occasional, unconfirmed sighting reports, but no known populations of fishers in Washington.

What makes you think fisher reintroduction will succeed?

Fishers are native to the Olympic Peninsula and occupied the area's lowland and mid-elevation forests in significant numbers until they were eliminated by overtrapping and habitat loss. Trapping, the primary factor in their decline, is now prohibited both within Olympic National Park and throughout the state. Large areas of good habitat still exist within Olympic National Park and surrounding Olympic National Forest lands and support a plentiful and diverse food source for fishers. Experience in other states (including Idaho, Montana and Oregon) suggests that fishers are among the most successfully reintroduced carnivores.

Where would the reintroduced fishers come from?

Fishers would come from either British Columbia or western Alberta. These animals are the most closely related to fishers that once occurred in Washington.

If fishers are reintroduced to Olympic National Park, would they stray outside the park?

If fishers are reintroduced to Olympic National Park and National Forest, they would be released into large blocks of mature forest and would not need to travel very far to find suitable habitat. Most of them would be expected to establish home ranges in the park and forest where the most suitable habitat is located. However, fishers are wide-ranging animals and some would be likely to explore lands outside the park.

Could there be a trapping season for fishers on the Olympic Peninsula?

While all hunting and trapping is prohibited within Olympic National Park, it is possible that fishers could be trapped again on Olympic National Forest lands if the species becomes successfully reestablished and can be removed from the state's

threatened and endangered list.

Are fishers dangerous?

Fishers are not dangerous to humans. They are small, weighing about as much as a house cat, and are solitary and secretive, typically avoiding people. We are not aware of any documented or undocumented cases of a fisher attacking a person. However, a sick, wounded or cornered fisher would be likely to bite or scratch.

Would they pose a threat to pets or livestock?

West coast fisher populations tend to avoid humans and developed areas. Fisher predation on domestic animals is a rare occurrence throughout the western states and provinces.

The recovery of fisher populations near densely populated areas in the northeast U.S. and eastern Canada has brought fishers into closer contact with people. In these areas, fishers are known to occasionally prey on domestic cats, rabbits and poultry.

Would fisher reintroduction lead to more limits and regulations on how we use public or private land?

Changes in the use of public or private lands as a result of a fisher reintroduction are not anticipated. There may be temporary access restrictions near any known den sites. These would likely pose limited impact to visitors because of the remote nature of fisher den sites and their denning time in early spring when visitation is low.

If a decision is made to reintroduce fishers, when would they be released?

Timing for a potential release will be further analyzed in an environmental assessment to be released later this year. The public will be invited to review and comment on this document. If the decision is made to reintroduce fishers, the earliest possible date for their release would be the fall of 2006, although it would be more likely to occur in 2007.

How will the decision whether or not to reintroduce fishers be made?

The proposal to reintroduce fishers to Olympic National Park is being analyzed and evaluated through an environmental assessment process. An initial public comment period (also known as public scoping) occurred from January 9 through February 10, 2006. Scoping comments will help define the issues and alternatives to be addressed and will be used to develop

an environmental assessment (EA). The EA, due out later this year, will examine alternative strategies for reintroducing fishers to the park, along with a no action alternative. The public will be invited to review and comment on the EA. Following completion of the EA and public comment review, the park superintendent will make a recommendation to the National Park Service Pacific West Regional Director who is responsible for a decision.

How do I learn more?

Visit the Olympic National Park website (<http://www.nps.gov/olymp>) for more information and links to several WDFW documents, including the Feasibility Assessment for Reintroduction of Fishers to Washington (2004) and the Final Fisher Status Report (1998).

How can I get involved?

Anyone interested in fisher reintroduction is encouraged to provide comments about the proposal to reintroduce fisher to Olympic National Park.

Comments may be sent to:

**Superintendent –
Fisher Reintroduction
Olympic National Park
600 East Park Avenue
Port Angeles, WA 98362
Fax: 360-565-3015
Email: olymp_ea@nps.gov**

Comments may also be submitted online at:

<http://parkplanning.nps.gov>, and select "Olympic National Park".

To add your name to the park's mailing list to receive information about the fisher reintroduction proposal:

Contact the park at 360-565-3004.



Queets Road Washout

By Jim Scarborough, OPA Board of Trustees.

Poorly sited roads in the Olympic Mountains have long been a serious problem, and the situation today has hardly changed. Whether originally constructed for logging or recreation, forest roads are often situated unfavorably, and the severely wet climate of the Olympic Peninsula makes quick work of them. While indisputably a taxpayer drain insofar as maintenance is concerned, many eroding roads also inflict severe damage upon our native fisheries, fragment sensitive habitats, and spread noxious weeds. Although the Park Service and Forest Service are gradually acknowledging and acting upon such issues, these agencies still seem to ascribe a near-sacred quality to certain road corridors, regardless of the extent of their decay and the ecological damage they cause.

The latest example of this management conundrum is the Queets Road in Olympic National Park. In March of 2005, a slide at milepost 8 of this 14-mile primitive road undermined the grade to the extent that it required closure to vehicles at Matheny Creek. A visit to the site by the author this past September revealed an obvious spring, emerging some distance above the slide, which was in the process of systematically dislodging the road fill into the Queets floodplain below. It

was clear then that this problem had only just begun. And, once the heavy rains of January 2006 arrived, nearly fifty meters of the road completely fell away, leaving only a vertical free-fall to the river. The spring – now actually a full-fledged creek – runs down the face.

Prior to the collapse of this part of the Queets road, the Park Service had initiated an environmental assessment (EA) to analyze a proposed re-route above the washout, and solicited a round of public comments. The agency reports this EA is still on track for release in the next few months and the re-route remains on the table, though other alternatives may need to be explored given the new circumstances at the site.

During the autumn visit to the Queets, this author noted that the road's steep grade between the Matheny Creek bridge and the slide farther along is already quite significant, so in that regard the proposed re-route above the groundwater's point of emergence would clearly be a dubious engineering project. If the re-route were pursued the damage inflicted on the wet hillside here would include channeling the otherwise natural hydrology, removal of dozens of mature conifer trees, as well as likely steep

sidecuts and armoring of the slope. And, regrettably, this would occur directly above arguably the wildest and most intact river on the Olympic Peninsula.

To be sure, recreationists have made much use of the Queets Road over the years, in order to

reach the stunning rain forest above Sams River, to camp at road's end, and to fish. Facilitating continued visitation of this sort underlies the Park Service's motivation to reestablish the road, though there is a sad irony in degrading a part of Olympic National Park for the purpose of accessing other portions which mercifully remain pristine.

Thankfully, though, there is another option to weigh, which would entail accessing the Queets via Forest Service roads 21 and 2180 from Highway 101, then connecting to the Queets Road above the washout using the 010 spur across a brief interlude of state forest land. This spur is presently gated at the park boundary. At minimum, this option, which would not require damaging new construction, deserves of study.

OPA will be monitoring this situation closely (as we have the massive road washout and agency shenanigans on the Dosewallips River, in grim anticipation of a still-pending draft environmental impact statement there). We will submit formal comments upon release of the Park Service's EA. In the meantime, as the Olympic Mountains' winter floods assert themselves against our redundant and excessive road system, we would do well to contemplate a future in which our utmost priority is the integrity of our wildlands for their own sake, versus how far our vehicles might penetrate there.

Photo courtesy of Olympic National Park.



For more information and/or to submit your own comments, contact:

Superintendent –
Queets Road Repair
Olympic National Park
600 East Park Avenue
Port Angeles, WA 98362
Fax: 360-565-3015

Web site:
<http://parkplanning.nps.gov>
Email: olym_ea@nps.gov

Five Conservation Organizations Take a Position On Commercial Thinning Sales On the Olympic & Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forests

From the newsletter of the Olympic Forest Coalition.

As the pressure to increase the level of logging on public lands continue, and more national forests claim that all or most of their timber sales are “restoration forestry” (that is, good for the forest ecosystem), representatives of the Olympic Forest Coalition (OFCO), Alpine Lakes Protection Society (ALPS), Pilchuck Audubon Society (PAS) and North Cascades Conservation Council (NCCC) developed a position statement on commercial timber sales in the Olympic and Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forests. We were greatly aided by Forest Ecologist Dr. Linda Winter, a member of OFCO’s Board. All Boards have approved this position. The Olympic Park Associates’ Board has also signed on to this position statement.

The position statement explains that the indicated organizations recognize that for each of these national forests, the NWFP specifies a commercial timber sale target, defined as the PSQ (probable sale quantity) and currently set at 10 million board feet (mmbf) for the ONF and 7 mmbf for the MBS. The organizations (except for PAS) accept annual average timber sale volumes up to, but not exceeding, these PSQ levels. This acceptance is only for timber targets and not for claimed ecological purposes of the timber sales. We remain unconvinced that these commercial sales will “accelerate” old-growth conditions, or old-growth like conditions, often claimed as one of the major purposes of many of these commercial sales, and often cited as one of the objectives of forest “restoration” activities. We have not seen any scientific research presenting convincing evidence that thinning will “accelerate” the achievement of old-growth conditions.

The current forested landscapes of both the Olympic and MBS national forests are drastically degraded and fragmented due to decades of heavy logging and road building activities. Commercial timber sales, when they exist, should be designed and implemented to minimize further degradation and fragmentation and include aggressive road decommissionings. This document does not address ways to help heal the forested landscape, or “restoration” as it is commonly

called, but is limited to presenting a checklist of sale properties that we examine when evaluating commercial timber sales, and our positions regarding these sale properties. Our objective in evaluating these sales is to advocate actions that will help minimize the ecological damage done by them. This list is by no means exhaustive. Rather, it presents some of our key positions concerning commercial timber sales. This checklist and our positions are in the position statement that can be viewed on the OFCO website (<http://www.olympicforest.org/index.html>) where it is posted.

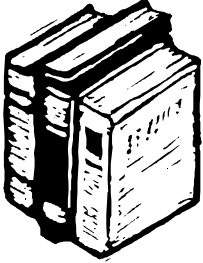
Bob Kaune photo.



Book Review:
Wilderness Forever:
Howard Zahniser and the Path to the Wilderness Act

by Mark Harvey. Weyerhaeuser Environmental Books Endowment, University of Washington Press, Seattle, 2005.

Reviewed by Philip Zalesky, OPA Secretary, Board of Trustees.



Mark Harvey in *Wilderness Forever* relates in historical detail the relentless defense of wilderness by Howard Zahniser. As Harvey points out, without any question Zahniser was one of the great icons and leaders in wilderness formation and paramount in the pursuit of legislation to create national designation for wilderness in the United States.

Here was a lobbyist in the best sense of the word who launched "...one of the Herculean efforts of the conservation movement in the 20th Century." Over nineteen Senate and House of Representative hearings in a variety of states were to come about on his Wilderness Bill and Zahniser attended everyone. In addition, he visited almost every wild or limited area which became a contentious controversy elicited by commodity groups.

William Condon in his foreword to the book sums him up by saying "...important to Zahniser's effectiveness was his essential decency and unfailing respect with which he treated everyone he encountered, whether they agreed with him or not."

The grounding for Zahniser's wilderness appreciation came from many years of activity in the east in the Adirondacks and Allegheny mountains. Many of us came to appreciate him, too, as we had valuable experiences with him here in the Pacific Northwest. Shortly after assuming his role as executive secretary of The Wilderness Society, he and Olaus Murie, the executive director, became intricately involved with the Three Sisters Wilder-

ness struggle from 1947 until the area received wilderness status. When Governor Langlie and Congressman Mac tried in 1953 to delete large areas of Olympic National Park, Zahniser convinced A.F. Hartung, president the International Woodworkers of America and a leader of the CIO, to oppose deletions. He also published in *Living Wilderness* our story and the devastating pictures of salvage logging in Olympic National Park that helped end the practice.

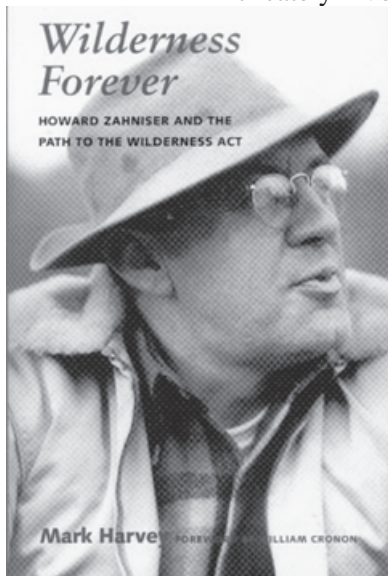
Zahniser came to our aid numerous times. My first acquaintance with him came in 1956 at

the First Northwest Wilderness Conference held in Portland, organized by The Mountaineers Conservation Committee. We invited and placed on the program many luminaries of the conservation movement: Executive Director Dave Brower of the Sierra Club; Executive Secretary Fred Packard and Western Director Ned Graves of the National Parks Association; Executive Director Olaus Murie and wife Mardy of The Wilderness Society; many other conservationists and, of course, Zahniser.

At the dinner meeting, The Mountaineers decided to promote our proposal for a Glacier Peak Wilderness Area. For that purpose, I was chosen by the committee to present my slides that Laura and I collected over extended periods of three summers in the proposed area. After that, Dave Brower was presented with a distinguished award from National Parks Association for the work he had accomplished in saving Dinosaur National Monument from being flooded.

We had placed Zahniser on the evening program with latitude to say anything he wished. He surprised attendees by making history: he presented for the first time his initial draft of the Wilderness Bill, which he had been contemplating since 1951, explaining its background and interpretation. Author Mark Harvey recounts Zahniser's struggle to precisely define "wilderness" in his bill: "Zahniser thought it crucial to find just the right word, and he had done so in 1956 during a conversation with his friend and fellow wilderness advocate, Polly Dyer, who had used *untrammled* to describe the ocean near Olympic National Park. He liked the word at once, and repeatedly defended its use in the Wilderness Bill." [I've suspected the word came into Polly's mind from defeating Governor Langlie's Mount Rainier Tramway proposal, a fight she led for The Mountaineers.] *Untrammled* to Zahniser did not mean pristine. In fact the wilderness area could have mature second growth forests.

From Portland Zahniser traveled to Seattle and stayed with Irving Clark, a board member of the Wilderness Society, longtime Northwest conservationist, and founder of Olympic Park Associates. While in Seattle, Leo Gallagher of The Mountaineers chartered an airplane to introduce Zahniser to



Continued on P. 11.

Olympic Coast Clean Up 2006 -- April 22-23

Long Beach Peninsula to Cape Flattery

Call for Volunteers!!! Come one, come all! Come join the fun!

Help collect and remove marine debris from Washington's beautiful Pacific Coast Beaches.

Each winter ocean storms wash ashore a new shipment of flotsam and jetsam: ropes, plastics, nets, tires and a lot of miscellaneous.

The clean up effort is designed to enhance and preserve one of Washington State's prime resources.

Last year 647 volunteers removed 37 tons of debris from beaches between Tokeland and Cape Flattery.

This year we're going all the way from the Long Beach Peninsula to Cape Flattery!

We are coordinating closely with community clean up efforts at Long Beach and Ocean Shores, so volunteers can support Ocean Shores and the Long Beach Peninsula community clean up projects happening during the same weekend.

Also the Point Grenville Beaches on the Quinault Reservation have been added.

How to Volunteer

Volunteers may come for just the one day, April 22, or both days. Many dedicated volunteers will spend 3 or 4 days on remote beaches in Olympic National Park.

Zahniser

Continued from P. 10.

the boundaries we proposed for Glacier Peak Wilderness Area. I went along as guide to point out boundaries The Mountaineers had worked on, and President Jack Hazle of The Mountaineers was also present.

Zahniser was not overly impressed from the air with the size of the Glacier Peak proposal, but changed his mind subsequently when he went on a Sierra Club outing organized by David Brower and led by Patrick Goldsworthy. What impressed him the most was hiking through the North Fork of the Sauk on his climb to camp at White Pass: the regal, eight-foot diameter trees, the beauty of the alpine flora of White Pass, the glacier carved valleys filled with towering Douglas firs, and the magnificence of the mountains.

Another important contact with Zahniser in Seattle which demonstrated his essential humanity came during Wilderness Bill hearings scheduled by Senator Henry Jackson in the Federal Courthouse. Without testifying himself, Zahniser guided us through two days of hearings. At the end of the first day Senator Jackson, the bill's co-sponsor, called for each side to have an individual represent its views the next morning.

Several of us, along with Zahniser, adjourned to the home of Patrick and Jane Goldsworthy to prepare a written pre-

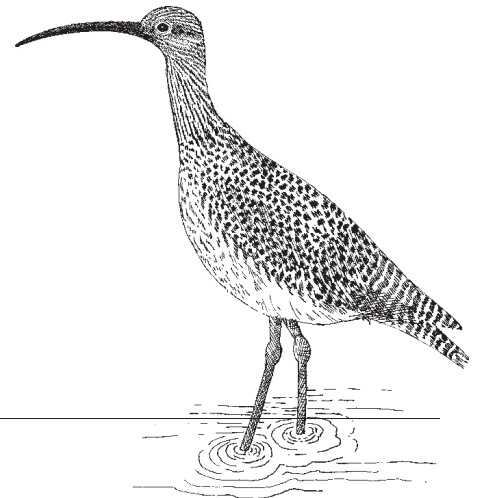
In the past some volunteers have put together a team of their friends or co-workers to clean up their favorite beach. Some beaches are easily accessible for younger people, while many of the remote coast requires more skilled volunteers.

Volunteer via the Web Page:

olympiccoastcleanup.us

Volunteer by Phone:

Call Jan Klippert 206-364-2689.



sentation. The Goldsworthys' typewriter was in the living room and Zahniser, tired as he was, lay on the floor adding comments but also regaling us with puns and stories of congressmen, members of the bureaucracy, and the executive branch. Under these circumstances of laughter and insights, we made only modest progress in organizing a coherent manuscript. After Zahniser left and the household headed for bed, Polly Dyer, Bill Halliday, and I adjourned to Halliday's medical office to complete the writing. We worked on its preparation until 4:30 A.M. It was really all for naught since when I attempted to speak to the paper and our position, the senator indicated a lack of interest in hearing from our side. What Jackson really wanted to do was grill the representative of the forest industry, and Zahniser signaled me to keep quiet. This was the man we came to know personally.

It is hard to imagine him going through 19 hearings with his bad heart and the pace he was keeping. He couldn't. He passed away at 58 just weeks prior to the passage of his hard-fought Wilderness Act.

Author Mark Harvey has brought out the character of the man, his constant advocacy, and has also placed in perspective the historical achievement of this man for generations.



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 2433 Del Campo Drive, Everett, WA 98208

New! In color! OPA Membership Brochure

Olympic Park Associates' new, self-mailing membership brochure features stunning color photos of Olympic National Park by OPA member Bob Kaune, a summary of OPA's 58 years of conservation accomplishments, and a view of future goals and objectives.

The brochure is a beautiful and handy way to introduce your friends to this venerable grassroots organization while building strength for OPA's future.

To order up to 10 copies of OPA's new membership brochure, contact
 Donna Osseward, 12730 9th Avenue NW,
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