

VOICE of the WILD OLYMPICS

Olympic Park Associates

Founded in 1948



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The Hoh River Trail. Photo by Pat O'Hara

Olympic National Park Reopens in Phases

As this issue of the *Voice* goes to press in early May, Olympic National Park is re-opening in phases, with selected day-use areas that receive less visitation opening first. Superintendent Sarah Creachbaum said the re-opening will depend on "being able to outfit our employees with adequate PPE (personal protective equipment), with adequate cleaning supplies to keep the restrooms clean and with adequate enforcement to keep people from crowding around restroom areas."

It remains unknown if the Park will open fully by summer. The National Park Service (NPS) will notify the public when it resumes full operations. Updates will be provided on the Park's website

nps.gov/olymp/learn/index.htm and social media channels.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, all Park facilities including visitor centers, contact stations, restrooms, lodges and roads have been closed. Winter operations at Hurricane Ridge ended on March 17 and coastal areas closed to the public on April 10. Overnight camping, including wilderness camping, was suspended. To make changes to or cancel existing wilderness permit reservations, contact the Wilderness Information Center at 360-565-3100 or email Olym_WIC@nps.gov.

Visitor and resource protection, law enforcement, public health services, and critical infrastructure operations have

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OPA Meetings

Next: May 26 at 6:00pm (conference call).

Upcoming: September 20 at 10:00am, Dungeness River Audubon Center, 2151 West Hendrickson Road, Sequim, WA, and November 18 at 6:00pm, Kingston Cove Yacht Club, Kingston, WA.

Regular Meeting Schedule: 4th Tuesday of odd-numbered months, except the 3rd Tuesday in November, and no meeting in July.

OPA members are always welcome at Board meetings.

Your Legislators

WA State: <http://app.leg.wa.gov/districtfinder>

US Congress: 202-224-3121 to reach any member of Congress

Senate: www.senate.gov

US House of Representatives: www.house.gov

US Senate, Washington DC 20510

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Seattle 206-220-6400
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Sen. Patty Murray (D)

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US House of Representatives, Washington DC 20515

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Unique and Needing Your Help

Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary

The Winter 2019 issue of the *Voice* featured an article about OPA's concern for maintaining the connection between Olympic National Park and the Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary. We see these designations as fraternal twins created to preserve



some of the Olympic Peninsula's natural land and sea regions together. They offer a unique opportunity to study the sea and land relationship – from whale to microorganism.

Looking into NOAA's website in April, OPA found that an *Incidental Take Authorization* was in process and public comment had already closed. The permit request was from the U.S. Navy to "take" marine mammals incidental to training and testing activities for a period of seven years, starting in November 2020. It is a continuation of the current five-year permit.

According to the NOAA website, "Permits may be issued for research, educational, salvage and recovery, archeological, or other projects which increase the scientific understanding or natural resource value of the sanctuary and its resources **if activities do not substantially injure sanctuary resources and qualities**" (emphasis ours).

The training activities listed in the Navy's permit application are for much more than using sonobuoys to detect submarines as the Navy did during the cold war. Now they include explosive detonations, sonar activity, small- and medium-caliber gunnery exercises, firing from aircraft at

Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary, photo by John Gussman

targets, firing from ships at targets, large-caliber gunnery exercises, missile exercises and torpedo (explosive) testing. Should we wonder why a taking permit would be needed?

OPA's struggle on the issue of Navy war training on the Olympic Peninsula has been to balance our desire for national defense against our mission to preserve natural areas on the Peninsula. OPA places a high value on nature's role in protecting our country's future well-being and economy. Can we use our land and sea assets in ways that insure future generations will be able to use and enjoy them as well? We are only beginning to perceive how dependent our future well-being is on nature's good health.

The Navy attempts to reduce environmental damage with the promise of mitigation. The problem with mitigation is ecosystem health cannot be mitigated. Ecosystems are like organisms. When organs are reduced or removed from an organism, the organism cannot function as it once did. The only useful mitigation is to not use the Sanctuary for military training. Cannot the Navy find another area out of 99.5% of American

Continued on P. 9, Sanctuary

Park Moves to Lethal Mountain Goat Removal

Compiled from reports in Peninsula Daily News and other publications

This fall Olympic National Park will begin lethal removal of non-native mountain goats from the Olympic Mountains. This phase of the multi-year removal will involve ground-based shooting by trained volunteers. In April, ONP put out a call for groups of skilled volunteer trackers and sharpshooters with mountain and wilderness experience. Following rigorous vetting, 18 groups of three or more will be selected, six groups for each of three planned hunts from September 9 to October 16. Volunteers will be trained and assigned to remote areas of the Park for culling.

Patti Happe, ONP wildlife branch chief, emphasized to *Peninsula Daily News* that this is not a hunt, but a culling operation under the Park's 2018 Mountain Goat Management Plan. Since the plan was implemented, more than 300 mountain goats have been live captured and removed from the Park and Olympic National Forest. Some 275 goats were translocated to Forest Service



photo by John Gussman

land in the Washington Cascades where mountain goats are native.

One more live capture and transport operation is planned for late July of this year. Park managers estimate that this operation will fulfill the plan's goal of capturing more than half the estimated goats in the Olympics. Management efforts will then switch to lethal removal of

remaining goats in the fall. If goats remain following the culling operations, they will be removed by aerial shooting. OPA fully supports the Park's plan for goat removal. Grazing, wallowing, and trampling by non-native mountain goats have inflicted irreparable harm to fragile alpine and subalpine plant communities in the Olympics. Removal of all non-native goats from Olympic Park and Forest to allow for the recovery of damaged areas is sound management for this World Heritage Site and Biosphere Reserve.

For more information on non-native mountain goats in the Olympics, visit OPA's website, olympicparkassociates.org.

Paul Robisch Named New Secretary for OPA

At the March 2020 meeting, via telephone conference, of OPA's Board of Trustees Paul Robisch was chosen to be the Secretary of the Board. He joined OPA's Board in 2016 to serve as its Membership Chair and will continue in that position in addition to being secretary. He has previous secretarial experience with The Mountaineers and the Mountaineers Foundation, both of which are outdoor- and conservation-minded organizations.

After receiving a graduate degree in chemistry from the University of Oregon, Paul found his way to Seattle in January 1964 and began a career of scientific research in the Federal fisheries department which in 1970 became part of the newly created NOAA.

For about the next four decades he learned to appreciate the magnificent natural beauty of the Pacific Northwest from hundreds of mountain summits, including 43 in the Olympic Mountains. The

highlights of his Olympic ventures were a first ascent of Mt Elk Lick in 1971, a nine-day climbing traverse of the Bailey Range in 1974 before the cross-country route became a *de facto* trail, spending a four-day Thanksgiving weekend in 1976 camping on the beach at Sand Point - Cape Alava in brilliant daytime sunshine with night time frost on the driftwood, and a climbing excursion in 1982 to the Low Divide area.

The common thread of all these activities is they have resulted in his permanent appreciation of the magnificent natural beauty and unimpeded sounds of nature in the Olympics. That's why Paul believes OPA and other like-minded organizations must do everything they can to prevent the Olympic Peninsula from being turned unnecessarily into a *de facto* war zone by ear-piercing naval growler jets.

OPA's trustees extend a hearty welcome to our new secretary.

National Parks Mean Jobs

By Rob Smith

Despite political divisions and stalemate on many fronts, the U.S. Congress is poised to pass landmark conservation legislation which would greatly benefit our national parks and other public lands.

... Or was about to before the coronavirus hit our shores. The Senate was on the verge of bringing to the floor the Great American

Outdoors Act (GAOA), S.3422, which would give permanent and full funding of \$900 million annually to the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) and would provide an infusion of \$9.5 billion over five years to repair facilities and trails in our national parks and other public lands.

The Senate recessed before a final vote could happen and when they returned the COVID-19 virus was dominating attention. At this writing it is uncertain when and how the Congress can meet and vote, but at some point they will return. Meanwhile, unprecedented funding has been allocated to health care and the economy as a top priority.

However, the GAOA could be part of the solution to a recovering America.

For one, protecting the outdoors through purchasing open space through the LWCF for recreation and habitats is just what the doctor ordered for a healthier population and environment.

Also, dollars spent repairing roads, water systems, trails, and historic structures at our



Olympic National Park, photo by John Gussman

national parks means jobs and a boost to local businesses as visitors return to enjoy places like Olympic National Park. At ONP alone the need has accumulated to \$150 million in deferred maintenance and repairs due to years of underfunding the park system by Congress.

The funding would come from mineral revenues, especially offshore oil drilling, and there is more than enough to fund these programs and more.

Both Washington Senators Maria Cantwell and Patty Murray are co-sponsoring the GAOA along with a majority of their Senate colleagues. But now is the time to make sure this legislation remains a priority for this Congress – and remind our officials that the GAOA can help get America back on its feet economically today as well as smartly invest for the future.

Please contact Sen. Cantwell (206-220-6400) and Sen. Murray (206-553-5545) to urge passage of the Great American Outdoors Act in this Congress.

Port Angeles Middle School Students Learn to Conduct Climate Research at Hurricane Ridge

By Students Brenna Murphy and Maggie White and Teachers Dylan Calinog, Jessica Elofson, and Dan Lieberman

Small questions come up, such as "How do you keep snowshoes strapped on?" and "Where is the hot cocoa?" But the big central question is the investigative focus for Port Angeles seventh graders on their annual winter field trip to Hurricane Ridge: "How is the changing snowpack, resulting from climate change, affecting park ecosystems and surrounding communities?"

Teachers and adult volunteers from Stevens Middle School answer the small questions as students rotate through six learning stations. A team of park rangers, teachers, accelerated eighth grade students, scientists, and Lower Elwha Klallam Tribal educators help students answer the big question. This field trip provided an atmosphere where worldly distractions were left behind and students were focused on something where they can make a difference.

At the end of Dylan Calinog's climate change station students played a game pretending they were violet-green swallows. They soon realized that if we continue on the path we are on, all violet-green swallows will end up perishing. Not only these birds, but all things connected to the food chain--insects, mammals and vegetation--will also suffer.



Eighth-grade students Maggie White (left) and Brenna Murphy (right) help the seventh graders collect snow water equivalent data at Hurricane Ridge. Photo by Dan Lieberman

snowpack was just over 100% of the recent 30 year "normal." Students also looked at the high level of variation over the past 50+ years. For instance, since 2005 we have seen the two lowest years on record and the clear downward trend of ~0.2 inches per year. Students looked closely at data from 2015. That year was 4° warmer than normal with no appreciable snowpack. Climate scientists warn 2015 may be a harbinger of conditions to come. An underlying theme stressed throughout the research is the importance of students getting along with each other and taking care of people and our

planet. The teachers agree that it is wonderful to allow the students to experience learning outside in a place that is literally in their backyard, but

At Jessica Elofson's station students reflected on the connections Native Americans have with the Olympic Mountains and its ecosystem. Students learned that this long connection is evidenced by science through a basket fragment from approximately 3,000 years ago that was found at Obstruction Point, by stories through tales of Thunderbird, Killer Whale and other animated forces of nature carving and connecting with the land.

At the station led by Dan Lieberman students got "deep" into snow science. They used a sampling instrument to obtain snow water equivalent data, which refer to the amount of liquid water contained in the snowpack. These measurements have been collected annually by park staff since 1968. Students collect new data, observe trends in past data and make connections between these trends and the water (and the living things that depend on the water) in the nearby Elwha River.

What do the data reveal? This past winter's

what do the students say?

After attending this field trip as seventh graders and then joining the eighth grade "Science Push Program," some star science students helped lead the field trip for this year's seventh graders. Maggie White said, "Brenna Murphy, a fellow eighth grader, and I both assisted with showing seventh graders how to take different snow weights and measurements. It was a fun and chilly experience putting on snowshoes to go back into the Olympic National Park to learn more about climate change." Brenna's reflections on the trip were these. "I have learned about the ecosystems and how the wildlife needs to have food chains to stay alive and about how the way wildlife populations grow and shrink can be easily impacted by humans. Without the protection of the national parks our ecosystem wouldn't be the same. Things like the salmon could have been gone by this time, damaging our ecosystem forever."

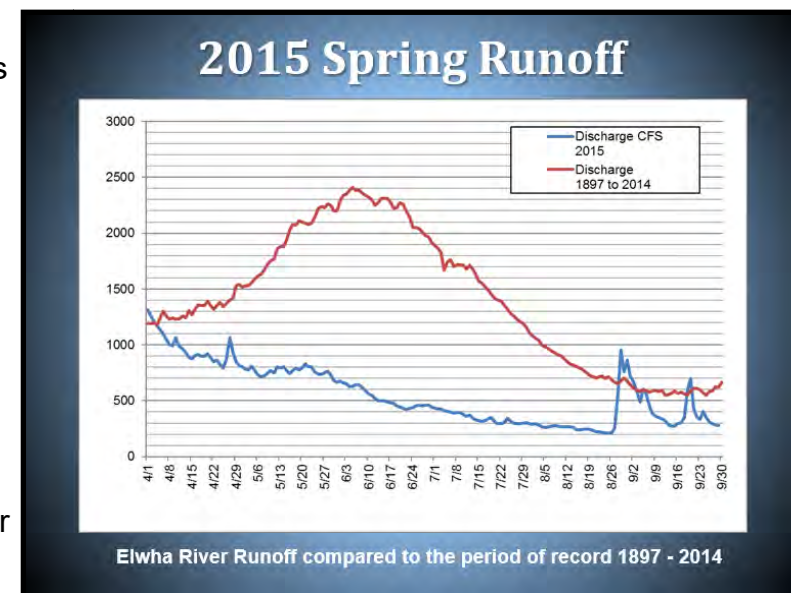


A seventh grader collects a snow core.

Thanks to support from Washington's National Park Fund, Port Angeles Education Foundation and the Port Angeles School District, this is the third year of these field trips. Those involved strongly support this annual field experience and anticipate it continuing well into the future. Having students experience their local national park like this will go a long way toward ensuring the parks and the ecosystems they protect will persist.



Science teacher Dan Lieberman leads a "Snow Science" station while Para educator Clare Wheeler looks on.



Elwha River Runoff compared to the period of record 1897 - 2014
2015 is the lowest snowpack and snow water equivalent year on record at 3% of normal.

By Darlene Schanfeld, Sierra Club North Olympic Group

Finfish Aquaculture Controversy Continues

In 2018, Cooke Aquaculture's Cypress Island net pens collapsed. The major escape of Atlantic salmon spurred the WA State Legislature to outlaw future raising of nonnative fish in pens. The net pen companies can continue until their permits terminate.

In this legislative session, to ensure funding and that the marine finfish aquatic farmers are held financially responsible for inspections, language was included in Senate Bill 6613 requiring that "the rules must provide for the recovery of actual costs incurred for required inspections, monitoring, and compliance testing by the department." The bill passed the legislature and was signed by Governor Inslee in March.

In February 2020, four non-profit organizations, Wild Fish Conservancy, Center for Biological Diversity, Center for Food Safety, and Friends of the Earth, jointly sued Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) for permitting steelhead farms in the marine waters of Skagit and Kitsap counties. These genetically

modified fish are not considered "native" by some. The major concern is these huge aquatic feedlots --- with their water-sediment pollution, fish diseases, and potential escapements --- interfere with protecting wild steelhead (listed as "threatened"), salmon, and orcas.

In response to WDFW's request for comments on a Mitigated Determination of Non Significance, (MDNS 19-05) regarding raising sterile all-female triploid rainbow trout/steelhead at existing marine net pen sites in Puget Sound, the Washington State Chapter of the Sierra Club requested that WDFW "begin the process to update the underlying January 1990 Final Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (FPEIS) on Fish Culture in Floating Net Pens. This would allow the Department to make recommendations based on new or updated science that has been discovered regarding this issue over the last 29 years." Also recommended is that WDFW begin an EIS process for land-based Recirculating Aquaculture Systems (RAS) to reduce or eliminate the impacts to the marine environment caused by net pens.

Reopen

Continued from P.1

continued throughout.

During the closure, Olympic National Park encouraged visitors to take advantage of the digital tools available to explore the Park. There are many educational resources available on the Park's webpage, nps.gov/olymp/index.htm, to help you stay connected to ONP. Park webcams are at nps.gov/olymp/learn/photosmultimedia/webcams.htm. You can check nps.gov/olymp for specific details about park operations.

At Olympic National Forest all developed recreation sites, including campgrounds, horse

camp, trailheads, cabins and day-use recreation sites are closed. Forest roads and trails remain open. Forest offices are closed but staff is available by phone weekdays: Forest Headquarters (360) 956-2402; Quilcene Office (360) 765 2200, and Quinault Office (360) 288 2525.

Governor Jay Inslee opened Washington state lands to hunting, fishing and day use on May 5. Public gatherings and events, team sports and camping are all still prohibited under the Governor's March 23 stay-at-home order. The order remains in place through May.

This has been an extremely tough time as our country and

the world respond to the COVID -19 pandemic. For many OPA members and friends the loss of the ability to visit Olympic National Park is particularly acute. Experiencing Olympic's wild grandeur helps put our human trials in perspective.

We at OPA hope everyone will be safe, stays healthy, practices social distancings and knows that the Olympic ecosystem is thriving with an above-normal snowpack, a verdant spring bloom -- and a welcome absence of commercial jet traffic. The Park we love will be there post-pandemic inviting us to once again to steep ourselves in its beauty.

Wild Olympics Legislation Passes U.S. House

February 12, 2020 was a landmark day for the Wild Olympics Wilderness and Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. Due to Representative Kilmer's (D-6) ongoing effort to champion our bill through the legislative process, it passed in the U.S. House with



Hamma Hamma Valley, Olympic National Forest, photo by John Gussman

bipartisan support as a part of H.R. 2546, the Protecting America's Wilderness Act. That act would protect nearly 1.4 million acres of wilderness in California, Colorado and Washington.

As readers know, OPA has been advocating for Wild Olympics for more than a decade. The bill was reintroduced into both the U.S. House and Senate multiple times. In December, it passed out of the House Natural Resources Committee and in February it sailed through the full House.

This is an exciting time for Wild Olympics supporters and a testament to all of your hard work and support. The landmark Wild Olympics legislation would permanently protect the Olympic Peninsula's ancient forests, free-flowing rivers and salmon streams for future generations.

It would protect more than 126,500 acres of Olympic National Forest roadless lands as wilderness, including some of the most popular hiking areas in the eastern and southern Olympics. It would also protect 19 rivers and their major tributaries, a

total of 464 river miles, as Wild and Scenic Rivers. If enacted, this would be the first new wilderness in Olympic National Forest in more than three decades and the first-ever protected Wild and Scenic Rivers on the Olympic Peninsula. There is certainly more work to do in the Senate. Senator Patty Murray has championed this legislation for years and we are confident she will see this legislation through to final passage. Together, with your help, OPA and our partner organizations in the Wild Olympics campaign will continue to work hard to secure permanent protections for the ancient forests, salmon streams, and wild rivers of the Olympic Peninsula.

For more information on the Wild Olympics campaign visit wildolympics.org.

Sanctuary

Continued from P.3

shoreline to conduct these exercises?

To preserve sanctuaries, like wilderness, is to preserve libraries and laboratories for natural species and processes. By preserving some ecosystems and using them in ways that keeps them whole, we gain

multiple benefits. We save thousands of species and their habitat. By studying these places, we learn how they work. They remain as sources of food and medicines against current and future diseases. Also, like trees on land, algae in the ocean absorbs carbon dioxide and provides much of the Earth's oxygen. A healthy ocean is necessary for our successful

living on Earth.

Navy training is needed BUT NOT in the Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary or over Olympic National Park.

We ask you to write NOAA and your U.S. Senators and Representative to protest the permit to use this amazing place for war training. See olympicparkassociates.org for more information.

Roadless Rule Under Attack

By Shelley Spalding

The Forest Service's Roadless Area Conservation Rule (Roadless Rule) protects 58.5 million acres of wild, undeveloped national forests across the country, including more than 9 million acres on the Tongass National Forest in Alaska. The Tongass is one of the largest remaining temperate rainforests in the world and is fantastic at storing carbon. Its old-growth trees store more carbon than any other national forest in the United States.

Adopted by the USDA Forest Service in January 2001 after the most extensive public involvement in the history of federal rulemaking and with overwhelming public support, the Roadless Rule generally prohibits road construction and commercial logging in national forest roadless areas.

In October 2019, the Trump Administration proposed elimination of these long-standing protections for unlogged old-growth forests within Alaska's Tongass National Forest in order to open vast tracts of the forest to widespread logging. The Forest Service is expected to release its final rule early this summer.

Although the proposed rule would eliminate protections for all 9+ million acres of the Tongass inventoried roadless areas, the Administration states that "the proposed rule would not cause a substantial loss of roadless protection" (Fed. Reg. p. 55524). This key assumption, which is stated numerous times in the Federal Register notice and DEIS, is that essentially the same amount of timber harvesting and road construction will likely occur in the Tongass regardless of whether or not the Roadless Rule continues to apply. This counter-intuitive contention is in line with the problematic impact analysis in the DEIS.

No public meetings regarding the proposed rule change were scheduled by the Forest Service in the lower 48 states outside of Washington D.C. But Washington Wild organized a community public meeting in Seattle on November 23 which was attended by about 100 individuals.

Among those at the meeting giving public testimony opposing the rule change was Senator

Maria Cantwell (D-WA). "Hundreds of thousands of Washingtonians throughout the state rely on roadless areas for clean drinking water and irreplaceable opportunities for outdoor recreation," said Senator Cantwell. "We need the Roadless Rule to permanently safeguard our remaining undeveloped forest lands as the foundation of our outdoor recreation economy, a home for wildlife, and a heritage for future generations."

There are nearly 50 million acres of roadless areas in our national forests. These lands are an American treasure. And while Alaska is the current target, there can be little doubt that other western states, including Washington, will be next. Here in Washington State we have just over 2 million acres of Roadless Areas,

"We need the Roadless Rule to permanently safeguard our remaining undeveloped forest lands as the foundation of our outdoor recreation economy, a home for wildlife, and a heritage for future generations." — Sen. Maria Cantwell



USDA Forest Service photo

including more than 85,000 acres in Olympic National Forest. They are a critical part of the quality of life we have come to expect. Roadless forests provide much of our clean and safe drinking water, protect fish and wildlife, and provide amazing back country recreation experiences and economic benefits. They also protect lands that may in the future become designated wilderness. OPA strongly opposes this attack on our public lands.



photo by Tom Hammond

A Last Day of Spring Skiing at the Ridge

by Tom Hammond

The drive up to Hurricane Ridge on Sunday morning, March 13, was magical. Snow-covered forests rose from the oceanside right up to the alpine. I drove through a winter wonderland, a scene that extended for as far as the eye could see. The color of the sky was remarkable, a robin's egg blue that turned to cobalt the higher I ascended.

Snow at sea level means COLD air at 5,200 feet. It was 15° F when I started skiing on Sunday morning. There was eight to twelve inches of fresh snow. It was like none I've ever experienced in the Olympics and only a couple times in the eastern Cascades. Here was a real continental snow, much what one would expect in the Canadian Rockies. The skiing was out of this world. "Mind Out of Body! Time Out of Mind!"

I'm not sure if there's a category for "Beyond Spectacular" but there is now. Total control authority – I was slaloming on 200 cm cross-country skis. Unreal! Exhilarating! Breathtaking (and not just from the cold)!

I was the first person out to the end of the track: solitude in a place famous for crowds. Here the Ridge is quite exposed to wind. I decided to explore off-trail/off track to experience the virgin snow. Immediately I was up to my knees in fresh powder, my skis completely submerged and out of sight. Occasionally the tips of my skis would appear like periscopes above the surface, but for the most part I was cut off at the knees. Wow!

It was here that I noticed the cold north winds had built cornices opposite those that typically form. For only the second time in my life I experienced double cornices. Winds are out of the southwest the vast

majority of the time and thus cornices build off the north and northeast sides of the ridges. Those cornices were still in place, but now there were cornices off the south and southwest aspects as well. I tried to cut (ski) some of the new cornices and was immediately in snow so deep that I was wallowing around. Even with 200 cm skis on, I was literally swimming in snow so deep and fluffy I couldn't really move! At one point I thought I would have to kick out of my skis and swim downhill to extricate myself. After floundering around for five minutes I got myself back to my feet and headed back to the regular track.

Backcountry/downhill skiers were in evidence everywhere, carving turns on every side of Mount Angeles and surrounding ridges – steep slopes I could not imagine taking on. So many people were having fun in conditions that had us all stumbling over words of excitement.

The National Park Service reported 101 inches of snow at the lodge, with total snowfall for the season at 23 feet. Normally (historically) there are about 34 feet of snow here. The record is from the glorious Winter of 1998-1999: 62 feet.

I returned two days later on the Ides of March for more skiing, visiting with the locals and chatting up the visitors. I reminded all of them that the Equinox was just around the corner with days longer than the nights and ample time to celebrate. The message was well received.

I am so thankful for the desire and ability to explore our Olympic National Park. Gratitude is an essential element to backcountry explorations – or really any explorations we choose to experience.



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