



VOICE of the WILD OLYMPICS

Vol. 31 No. 1

Olympic Park Advocates

Spring -Summer 2023

OPA at 75

*A Storied
Past
And A
Vision For
The Future*

Story on page 3

Mount Olympus and Deer by John Gussman

Contents

3	OPA at 75
4	Demonstrators Protest Logging in Elwha Watershed
4	Elwha Restoration Reaches a Milestone.
5	Nothing Changed for 75 Years, That's a Good Thing
6	How a River Breathes
6	Extinction Is Not An Option
7	Supporters Cheer Earth Day Reintroduction W.O.
8	Donating Blood
9	Olympics Enjoy a Healthy Spring Snowpack
9	A tribute to Ken Balcomb
10	Hurricane Ridge Visitor Center Lodge
10	Last Hurrah at Hurricane Ridge (for a while)
11	OPA's Wolf Committee Makes Progress
11	Washington Modernizes Trust Lands Transfer

Your Legislators

WA State: app.leg.wa.gov/districtfinder.

U.S. Congress: 202-224-3121 to reach any member of Congress

Senate: senate.gov, **US House of Representatives:** house.gov

Sen. Maria Cantwell (D)
DC 202-224-3441
Seattle 206-220-6400
cantwell.senate.gov

Sen. Patty Murray (D)
DC 202-224-2621
Seattle 206-553-5545
murray.senate.gov

1 Suzan DelBene (D)
202-225-6311
Kirkland 425-485-0085
delbene.house.gov

6 Derek Kilmer (D)
202-225-5916
Tacoma 253-272-3515
Bremerton 360-373-9725
Port Angeles 360-797-3623
kilmer.house.gov

2 Rick Larsen (D)
202-225-2605
Everett 425-252-3188
Bellingham 360-733-4500
larsen.house.gov

7 Pramila Jayapal (D)
202-225-3106
Seattle 206-674-0040
jayapal.house.gov

3 Marie Gluesenamp Perez (D)
202-225-3536
Vancouver 360-695-6292
gluesenkamppez.house.gov

8 Kim Schrier (D)
202-225-7761
Issaquah 425-657-1001
Wenatchee 509-850-5340
schrier.house.gov

4 Dan Newhouse (R)
202-225-5816
Yakima 509-452-3243
newhouse.house.gov

9 Adam Smith (D)
202-225-8901
Renton 425-793-5180
adamsmith.house.gov

5 Cathy McMorris Rodgers (R)
202-225-2006
Colville 509-684-3481
Spokane 509-353-2374
Walla Walla 509-529-9358
mcmorris.house.gov

10 Marilyn Strickland (D)
202-225-9740
Lacey 360-459-8514
strickland.house.gov

Olympic Park Advocates

**Board of Trustees
*Executive Committee**

President

*John Bridge Sequim, WA

Vice President

*Tim McNulty Sequim, WA

Secretary

*Paul Robisch Seattle, WA

Treasurer

*Annie Cubberly Olympia, WA

President Emeritus

Donna Osseward Seattle, WA

Tom Bihn Winthrop, WA

David Friedman Seattle, WA

John Gussman Sequim, WA

*Tom Hammond Port Angeles, WA

Dan Lieberman Port Angeles, WA

Mary Peck Santa Fe, NM

Rob Smith Bainbridge, WA

Shelley Spalding Elma, WA

Advisory Board Members

Janis Burger Port Angeles, WA

Paul Crawford Santa Barbara, CA

Bruce Moorhead Port Angeles, WA

Rick Rutz Kenmore, WA

Jim Scarborough Bellingham, WA

John Woolley Sequim, WA

Membership Chair

Paul Robisch
PO Box 27560, Seattle, WA 98165-2560

Newsletter Editor

Amy Youngblood
ybwest@sbcglobal.net

Website Manager

Alex Bradley
alexbrad37@gmail.com

olympicparkadvocates.org

VOICE OF THE WILD OLYMPICS

Masthead photo by Pat O'Hara

VOICE is published two or three times per year by Olympic Park Advocates.

Unless specifically copyrighted, articles may be reprinted without permission. However, credit is appreciated.

Printed by Abracadabra Printing on acid- & chlorine-free FSC-certified paper, 10% recycled, 30% post-consumer waste

OPA at 75: A Storied Past and Vision for the Future

By Tim McNulty

Seventy-five years ago, a group of conservationists came together to defend the recently created Olympic National Park against attempts to remove its magnificent rain-forest valleys. A decade earlier, they had succeeded in establishing a large park with some of the most spectacular ancient forests remaining in the United States. No sooner was the new park signed into law than raids against its forests were mounted. Knowing this would be an ongoing battle, the group incorporated as Olympic Park Associates, now Olympic Park Advocates (OPA).

Three-quarters of a century later, that same organization continues to defend this world-class park and work for protections for its surrounding ecosystem. Only now, OPA pursues its mission amid a cavalcade of threats fueled by increasing human demands and a rapidly warming climate.

As we celebrate our 75th year, it's worth reflecting on our legacy of successes. But it's also critical that we face current challenges honestly and refocus on the work that remains to be done.

A Legacy of Success

As a small citizens-based group, OPA not only fought back repeated efforts by timber interests to shrink the park, we also added significantly to its outstanding protected areas. We lobbied to add the wild Pacific coastal strip and the Queets River corridor to Olympic. We turned back a highway proposal along the coast with two well-publicized hikes led by then-U.S. Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas. We put a stop to destructive salvage logging in the park and sent a timber-oriented superintendent packing.

OPA led the effort to add scenic Shi Shi Beach and Point of the Arches to Olympic and we beat back several dam proposals on East Olympic rivers. Responding to increasing pressure to log Olympic National Forest, OPA and allies secured designation of some 90,000 acres of unprotected wildlands as the Buckhorn, Brothers, Mount Skokomish, Wonder Mountain, and Colonel Bob wilderness areas. We also led the effort to secure Congressional designation of 95 percent of Olympic National Park as the Daniel J. Evans Wilderness. OPA helped establish the Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary. And we worked with Tribal and conservation partners to pass the Elwha River Restoration Act and lobbied for funding to see both Elwha dams removed and salmon return to the river's free-flowing waters.

We're proud of these and other landmark accomplishments, and we continue to dedicate ourselves to major legislative campaigns. The Wild

Olympics Wilderness and Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, which has passed the U.S. House several times, was reintroduced in this congress in April. But much of our work proceeds quietly and diligently to ensure that day-to-day decision making by government agencies provides maximum protection to the peninsula's invaluable natural resources.

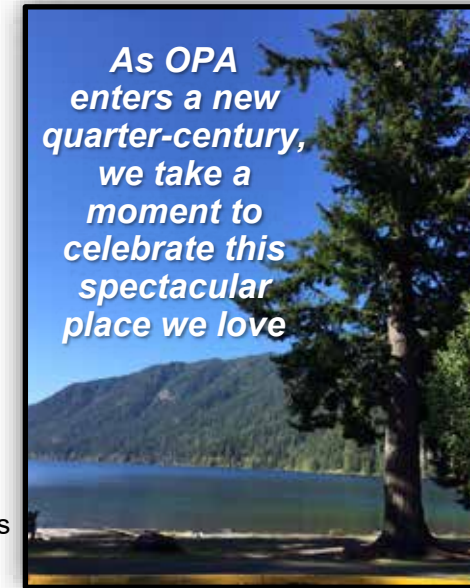
OPA lobbied to ban noisy jet skis from Lake Crescent and organized public support to influence the park's General Management Plan to recommend wild river protections and no-take intertidal reserves. We urged the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to undertake a feasibility study to reintroduce wolves to the Olympics, and we supported a Park Service and Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife initiative to reintroduce Pacific fishers, the only other native mammal species missing from the park. Ten years later we helped fund a supplemental fisher reintroduction to insure its genetic resilience. We went to court to successfully block the park from airlifting two preconstructed shelters into remote wilderness meadows. We opposed Navy warfare training over the Olympics. And we

advocated for removal of non-native mountain goats from the park and national forest. We also helped fund glacier research, Roosevelt elk research, and martin research in the park and national forest.

A Vision for the Future

As OPA enters a new quarter-century, we are heartened by past accomplishments and we resolve to meet new challenges with the same dogged determination. The reality of climate change adds urgency to our actions. The Olympic ecosystem needs to be bolstered to respond to coming changes. Legacy forests, whether on state or Forest Service lands, should be off-limits to logging and preserved for carbon storage. Threatened and endangered species, such as wild salmon stocks, spotted owls, and marbled murrelets, must be restored across the ecosystem. Rare and endemic species should be monitored and their populations enhanced when needed, and critical, willing-seller habitat lands should be added to the park. The Olympics' apex predator, the wolf, should be returned to the park—to strengthen Roosevelt elk herds and to curb coyote predation on endemic Olympic marmots.

The list is daunting. But with continued support and engagement by you, our members, we pledge to meet these challenges. In the meantime, take a moment to celebrate this spectacular place we love—and renew your support for the tenacious, grass-roots outfit dedicated to protecting it.



National Park Service

Demonstrators Protest DNR Logging in the Elwha Watershed

logged again on short rotations, legacy forests grew naturally following disturbances or early logging. They are older and contain a mix of species, ages, and structures (standing snags and down logs), and they are well on their way to becoming viable old-growth habitat. Legacy forests also serve a critical function in

By Tim McNulty
Increased logging of older, naturally generated "Legacy" forests by Washington's Department of Natural Resources (DNR) triggered a demonstration on the banks of the Elwha River in March. Protesters challenge the ongoing Aldwell timber sale on the Little River, a tributary of the Elwha.



Protester at Elwha logging demonstration. Photo by John Gussman.

Jamestown S'Klallam and Lummi tribes carried signs, drummed, and sang to protest clearcutting in the Elwha watershed. The Elwha, of course, was the subject of a \$327 million salmon and ecosystem restoration. The rally was also attended by members of the timber industry who supported the logging. Chainsaws were revved.

Unlike intensively managed forests, which are clearcut and planted with single-species trees to be

sequestering carbon and should play a central role in curbing global warming. Pacific Northwest Forest Climate Alliance has called for a moratorium on logging all remaining legacy forests, of which there are some 80,000 acres on DNR lands. Hillary Franz, Washington's Commissioner of Public Lands, has proposed protecting a meager 10,000

acres of these lands (less than one percent of state timber lands) as carbon reserves. None are in Clallam County. Unfortunately, Commissioner Franz's DNR appears to be targeting the rest for logging.

In contrast with DNR's managed plantations, Washington's mature forests absorb and sequester carbon better than almost any terrestrial ecosystem on the planet. Let's give them the chance.

Elwha River Restoration Reaches a Milestone

The Elwha River restoration reached a milestone in early May. The Elwha Klallam Tribe, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife and Olympic National Park announced a limited Tribal Ceremonial and Subsistence Fishery for coho salmon on the lower river. For the first time since dam removal more than a decade ago, Elwha tribal fishers will be permitted to fish for hatchery-based coho salmon in the lower three miles of the river. The fishery will take place in October and will be limited to 400 fish.

Matt Beirne, Natural Resources Director for the Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe, told the *Peninsula Daily News*, "The dams were installed in 1912 and 1926

against the wishes of the tribe and without any fish passage facilities, so this is a long time coming."

"The tribe has made a significant sacrifice in the fishing moratorium in the last 12 years and is very excited to resume their fishing albeit a very modest, conservative fishing of coho," Beirne said.

Recreational and commercial fishing on the Elwha will resume when there is broad distribution of spawning adults above the former dam sites. Spawning rates allow for population growth and diversity, and ensure that a harvestable surplus of fish are returning to the Elwha River.

We congratulate the tribe for its dedication and commitment to bringing salmon back to its people.

Nothing Has Changed for 75 Years, And That's a Good Thing

By Rob Smith

In 1953, the year I was born, President Truman exercised an option to bring the longest undeveloped stretch of coastline in the Lower 48 states into Olympic National Park. That should have been enough to guarantee protection of these beaches, sea stacks and wild coast for all time. But it wasn't.

Within just a few years, boosters were advocating for an extension of U.S. 101 along the coast to bring more tourism to the area. This was the era of "Mission 66" within the National Park Service to accommodate post-war crowds flocking to the parks with new roads, lodges, campgrounds, and other facilities – rebuilding park infrastructure and measuring success by visitation numbers.

However, Olympic Park Associates (OPA's original name) teamed up with other organizations to keep the park's coastal strip wild. A key moment came when Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas led a hike along the coast from Cape Alava to Rialto Beach and the road proposal was shelved. The event was organized by Polly Dyer, who later went on to lead OPA.

But in 1964 the idea came to life again when the federal Bureau of Outdoor Recreation proposed a 40-mile highway from Ruby Beach to Cape Alava, twice as long as the earlier proposal. And once again, OPA and allies, including Justice Douglas, hiked up the coast to draw attention to the value of keeping it like it is. OPA's Donna Osseward joined that hike as a young member of the group.

I had the opportunity to hike these routes in the early 70's when my high school sponsored all-school outings led by an avid outdoors lover and physics teacher. They were a foundational experience in my life and led me to a career



In 1958, U.S. Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas led a 22-mile hike along the northern Washington coast to protest a proposed extension of Highway 101. Seattle Times photo.

trying to save special places like these.

In August of 2017, to mark the anniversary of the first Douglas coastal hike, I teamed up with OPA's Tim McNulty and others to join Washington's Attorney General Bob Ferguson on a re-creation of that first walk to underscore the threat to the coast from proposed offshore oil and gas drilling. Although it hasn't happened yet, the Washington coast is still vulnerable to that development.

What is remarkable and wonderful about each of these walks is that the experience remains undiminished and is still there for the future. I walked where Justice Douglas walked, where I had walked decades ago, where people have lived for thousands of years, and the place is still the remote, beautiful and wild landscape now as it was then. Few other places can provide that.

That's why Olympic Park Advocates is critical, and why I want to be part of it. It is ongoing work to make sure that nothing changes along the wild coast of Olympic National Park.

How a River Breathes

By Al Bergstein, *Olympic Peninsula Environmental News*

Filmmaker and OPA trustee John Gussman caught two views of the new levee project on the Dungeness River recently. The levee was relocated to expand the river's floodplain. By allowing the river to "breathe" and overflow its banks, without endangering manmade structures like homes and farms, you save the river and the ecosystem that it exists in. As you can see, the photographs are less than one month apart. Allowing home development in such a location is asking for problems, and problems were what the Dungeness valley had for many decades after white people attempted to tame the river.

This is a compromise. The river is allowed to breathe, a few farms and homes are paid to relocate, and moving forward, the likelihood of more salmon coming back to a habitat that they can survive and reproduce in is given a much higher probability of success. In addition to fish, this promotes a wide array of flora and fauna, including ducks, geese, and many others.

The Dungeness River Management Team (DRMT), which includes farmers and duck hunters, with help from the Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe, worked for decades to make this possible, with millions in help from the federal and state government and our State and Federal representatives.

For a more detailed look at this issue, you can watch my 2010 film, "Working for the River" that covers the issues in recovering the Dungeness. <https://vimeo.com/80651319>



Drone photography by John Gussman.

Supporters Cheer Earth Day Reintroduction of Wild Olympics Bill

OPA joined the Wild Olympics Coalition in celebrating the Earth Day '23 reintroduction of the Wild Olympics Wilderness and Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, sponsored by Senator Patty Murray and Representative Derek Kilmer (D-WA-06). With a strong foundation of broad local support and the steadfast efforts of the two Congressional leaders, the bill has made steady progress each successive Congress. Last year the bill passed the House with bipartisan support and advanced farther than ever before in the Senate.

The Wild Olympics legislation would permanently protect more than 126,500 acres of Olympic National Forest as wilderness and 19 rivers and their major tributaries – a total of 464 river miles – as Wild and Scenic Rivers. Designed through extensive community input to protect ancient forests and clean water and enhance outdoor recreation, the legislation will designate the first new wilderness in the Olympic National Forest in nearly four decades and the first-ever protected wild and scenic rivers on the Olympic Peninsula. "Wild Olympics is OPA's foremost legislative



Sams River. Photo by Javin Elif

effort," said OPA President John Bridge. "It includes some of the most popular unprotected hiking areas in the national forest. We'll continue to work with Congressman Kilmer and Senator Murray to pass this landmark legislation."

For more information, visit the websites wildolympics.org or olympicparkadvocates.org.

"The significance of our lives and our fragile planet is...determined only by our own wisdom and courage. We are the custodians of life's meaning. We long for a Parent to care for us, to forgive us our errors, to save us from our childish mistakes. But knowledge is preferable to ignorance. Better by far to embrace the hard truth than a reassuring fable." -- Carl Sagan

Unfortunately, as recently reported in the *Seattle Times*, "the hard truth" is that over a third of species and ecosystems in the United States are at risk of disappearing, including hundreds of plants and animals. And one of the four vulnerable ecosystems in Washington is the Western Hemlock-Sitka Spruce Rainforest. This area includes the tall evergreen conifer forest on and near the Pacific Coast and from central British Columbia to Northern California.

The conservation research group NatureServe recently released a report analyzing data from more than 1,000 scientists across the United

Extinction is Not an Option

By Shelley Spalding

States and Canada. The report classified ecosystems into "imperiled" (those with a high risk of range-wide collapse) and "vulnerable" (those at risk of becoming imperiled without intervention).

Across the country, the study found that 40 percent of animals and 34 percent of plants in the United States are at risk of extinction, with freshwater species like amphibians, snails, mussels, crayfish, and many aquatic insects facing the highest risk of extinction. Insects such as butterflies, bees, and dragonflies are highly imperiled, with 37 percent of bees facing extinction. Because most at-risk species and ecosystems are found outside of conservation areas, they are insufficiently protected to prevent further declines.

In Washington, approximately 8 percent of the state's plant species and at least 13 percent of animal species are at risk. Threats to these species and their ecosystems include habitat degradation and land conversion, invasive species, damming and polluting rivers, and climate change. The northern spotted owl is particularly at risk, according to Jerry Franklin, professor emeritus in the School of Environmental and Forest Sciences at the University of Washington and one of the world's premier authorities on old-growth forest ecosystems. "Without some kind of active management to reduce the barred owl populations in at least a part of the range of the northern spotted owl, that subspecies is definitely going to go extinct," Franklin said.

"There's a tendency for people to think that biodiversity is like frosting on the cake, with pretty birds and butterflies and pretty plants with nice flowers," Franklin said. However, according to Franklin, these plants and animals and "the complex relationships among them are absolutely critical to the functioning of life on this planet, to our existence."

Donating Blood

By Tom Butler

Gardening in the spring sun with no shirt, I'd hoped to both horrify my kids and get a little early toasting. Seems too early for bugs but the swallows are here, so... Aaaaannd, there they are. The first mosquito bites of the season are always a welcome treat. The itch feels good in the same way the first light sunburn is a warm promise of good things to come.



Photo from Appalachian Mountain Club

It's a marvel how quickly mosquitoes find you. As you probably know, they follow your exhaled carbon dioxide to get in the neighborhood, and then a combination of color, body odor, movement, and temperature to home in. Females need blood to make eggs, but the males find mates by listening for their particular wingbeat frequency and so are buzzing around your face in the reasonable expectation that's where the girls are. Even though it might seem like it sometimes, not all mosquito species are attracted to humans. Many prefer birds, reptiles or other mammals, and are biting you just because you're a pretty easy and majestically hairless target sprawled there in your lawn chair without any fur or feathers to dig through. You could slather yourself in repellants, or just try to make yourself look less appetizing. If you avoid black, red, orange and turquoise, in favor of white, green or blue, and don't drink liquor or wear perfume, you'll be nearly transparent. Oh, and hold your breath.

Her proboscis is a six-part miracle of evolutionary engineering. Tiny saw blades at the maxillae tips cut a plunging hole while forceps-like mandibles hold the tissues apart. When the probing grooved labrum finds a blood vessel, the hypopharynx (which until now has been busy pumping in analgesic/anti-coagulant saliva) slaps

on top to create a tube. Your own blood pressure now fills her abdomen, as much as tripling her weight.

The female needs a pretty full blood meal to manufacture her batch of 150 or so eggs. Most mountain species lay them on the ground in places that will be wet during snowmelt while lowland species lay little rafts of eggs that look like flat wads of gray sawdust floating on the water. Larval

"wrigglers" eat algae and bacteria filtered with modified antennae, cleaning the water, be it bucket, pond, or old tire. Both larvae and pupae are air-breathers, hanging on the surface tension to rest and breathe through little snorkels at their tail ends. Greeks and Romans knew a little olive oil on a buggy pond would

destroy the surface

tension, causing the larvae to quickly exhaust themselves and drown.

Maddening as they can be, mosquitoes are integral to every ecosystem they occupy. A whole generation can be as short as ten days. Around here our mosquito season is too short and dry, but under ideal conditions, a single female can theoretically produce five hundred million offspring in four months. Lucky for you, the besieged blood donor, every stage of development contributes essential food for everything from fish and amphibians to predatory insects, birds and bats. A swallow can put away a thousand mosquitoes in a day. A bat might eat a third of its weight in an evening. A friend of mine religiously eats every mosquito he swats. The beginning of the food chain.

In many warmer parts of the world, mosquitoes are dangerous vectors of parasitic diseases but even that isn't all bad. It was malaria that forced Cornwallis's surrender to Washington, and when yellow fever killed ninety percent of French soldiers sent to occupy the Mississippi, Napoleon had to sell the Louisiana Purchase for cheap. For the time being we're too cool around here to have to worry much about disease. Think of your next mosquito bite as a philanthropic act. It's a blood donation.

Olympics Enjoy a Moderately Healthy Spring Snowpack

By Tom Hammond

I'm happy to report news is good for the snowpack in our Olympic Mountains, and the skiing over the winter was exceptional. First the snowpack portion of the report comes with a reminder that "snowpack" doesn't refer simply to the depth of the snow, but the snow water equivalent (SWE) which is the amount of water contained in the snow. This snowpack represents water for fish, animals, and humans for the dry months of summer, and indeed, year 'round.

After a good start to winter thanks to frisky November and December storms, January, February, and most of March provided very little in the way of building snowpack and SWE, especially in the interior and northern portions of the mountains. At the end of March 2023, snowpack was more than 100 percent of normal for southern and western sections of the range, but only about 65 percent of normal along Hurricane Ridge and northeast sections that support drainages, such as the Dosewallips, Duckabush and Dungeness rivers. Curiously, the rain gauge at SeaTac Airport reported similar numbers where about 65 percent of normal precipitation fell. Same too for snowpack on Mount Baker (ski area/ Heather Meadows) where it was about 70 percent normal and according to my on-the-ground sources, about the same for the BC Coast Range of Whistler and Garibaldi. The cause of this region-wide shortfall was easy to see. The low-pressure systems that normally make landfall along the coast of Washington and British Columbia were tracking farther south impacting California and leading to (needed) record snowfall/precipitation for our friends to the south.

As with 2022, April saw a more regular and expected storm track (and it was pretty darn cold for us locals that wondered if spring would ever spring. As of this writing in early May, the numbers are encouraging: about 100 percent SWE for all stations



The Bailey Range, Winter Trees and Ski Tracks. Photo by Tom Hammond

in the northern, interior, and northeast sections of the Olympic Mountains, and even higher for the south and western sections. Snow depth at Waterhole on the Obstruction Point Road was 54 inches, and snow depth at Buckinghorse in the upper Elwha watershed was 100 inches. Here's hoping we don't have punishing heat like we did in 2021. Let's hold our snow well into the summer, please!

Skiing over the past winter was the best in at least five years here on the Peninsula, at least for the ski touring/cross-country skiing I do along Hurricane Ridge. Despite the lack of a healthy snowpack for much of the winter, it seemed that every Thursday just a few inches of snow would fall, making for fantastic skiing on "ski day Friday." That is, two or three inches of fresh powder with temps in the single digits or teens providing continental type snow found in the Methow or Rocky Mountains. These conditions made for great skiing, and they also made for great scenery. Layer upon layer of snow-covered forests, highlighted by layer upon layer of cloud decks made for some of the most dramatic vistas I've enjoyed in decades of mountain travel, here on the Olympic Peninsula, or anywhere in the world.

Ken Balcomb

A Tribute
to A Whale
Conservation
Hero

Ken Balcomb, founder of the Center for Whale Research in Friday Harbor and champion of whale conservation in Puget Sound, died in December. He was 82.

Beginning in 1976, Balcomb kept meticulous track of the southern resident orcas. He pioneered photo-identification of whales and compiled individual profiles of all the orcas in the three endangered pods: J, K and L. He became a passionate and outspoken advocate for whales and led the way in conservation efforts to preserve endangered southern resident orcas. He monitored them constantly, both visually and by underwater microphones.

Balcomb also became a passionate advocate for wild salmon conservation and dam removal on the Lower Snake River. Later in life, he moved to Big Salmon Ranch on the restored Elwha River, where he died surrounded by family.

Whales and humans have lost a remarkable friend.

Fire Destroys Hurricane Ridge Day Lodge

On May 7, as this issue of the *Voice* was going to press, shocking news arrived that the Hurricane Ridge Day Lodge burned to the ground. The Hurricane Ridge Road was closed, and the lodge was undergoing an \$11 million renovation funded by the Great American Outdoors Act. An investigation of the cause of the fire is under way.

The 70-year-old lodge was a much-loved structure in Olympic National Park, and it will be sorely missed. It was a gathering place to learn about the Olympics in the summer, through exhibits, interpretive talks on the terrace or ranger contacts, and a warm refuge from winds and sudden storms in winter. More than 300,000 people visit Hurricane Ridge each year,

making it the second-most-visited site in the park after the Hoh Rain Forest. Last year Clallam Transit began daily bus service to the Ridge from June to October.

Washington's U.S. Senators Maria Cantwell (D) and Patty Murray (D) and Congressman Derek Kilmer (WA D-6) are making it a priority to secure funding to rebuild the lodge. Interior Secretary Deb Haaland and the National Park Service are on board. OPA fully supports this effort. We

urge the Park Service to take this opportunity to design a green, energy-efficient visitor center on the existing footprint that will accommodate visitors to Hurricane Ridge and serve as a model for sustainable development.



Left: The Hurricane Ridge Day Lodge in Winter.
Right: The still-smoking wreckage. Photos by NPS.



Last Hurrah at Hurricane Ridge (for a while)

By Dan Lieberman

In March 2023, students from Stevens Middle School in Port Angeles headed up to Hurricane Ridge for the first time since March 2020, when the COVID pandemic forced suspension of annual climate change science education trips. This learning experience centers on the essential question, "How is the changing snowpack, resulting from climate change, going to affect park ecosystems and surrounding communities?"

Students strapped on snowshoes and rotated through three outdoor learning stations. They learned about snow science, avalanche safety, and the ecosystem. Then they had a chance to warm up as they rotated through three indoor stations and learned about Native American cultural history, climate change and its effect on glaciers. Students collected snow data, dug an avalanche pit, observed organism adaptations, heard traditional stories, modeled species range shifts in response to climate change, and compared historic and contemporary photos of glaciers.

The students demonstrated their newly gained knowledge by answering the essential question after their trip. Here are two student samples.

McHenry Miller: "It will mean that there is less water in our rivers for us to drink and it will also mean that glaciers will shrink "

Storey Schmidt: "The changing snowpack can affect other ecosystems and surrounding communities because our water comes from the Elwha, which is fed by the snow melt-off, and less water in the snowpack means less water for humans, and animals. Also, avalanches caused by heavy and light snow can affect the life on the mountain."

An additional theme the leaders of all learning stations teach is the importance of students getting along with each other and taking care of people and our planet. Having students experience their national park like this will go a long way toward ensuring the parks and ecosystems they protect will persist.

Students were glad to get a final (and for some students a first) experience in the Hurricane Ridge Visitor Center before the upcoming renovation.

Olympic National Park, Washington's National Park Fund, Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe, and Port Angeles School District collaborated to provide the funding, educators, and logistics to make this experience happen for students.

OPA's Wolf Committee Makes Progress

By Tom Bihn

Last year, OPA established a committee to review the prospects of wolves returning to the Olympic Peninsula. As many of you know, grey wolves were extinct on the Olympic Peninsula by 1935. Since then, the Olympic ecosystem has lacked its apex predator.

The wolf committee has been busy: We've recruited two committee members from outside our board, and we've had several guest speakers. We've learned a lot, and we've been made aware of how much we have yet to learn. While wolves have made an amazing comeback in Eastern Washington (and now, fingers crossed, the southwest Cascades!), how and when they might get to the Peninsula remains a mystery, shrouded as if in the rain and mist of the place itself.

While ONP acknowledges the benefits to the park's ecosystems of restoring wolves in its 2008 General Management Plan, thus far the park has made no moves towards reintroduction—or even developed a plan of what to do should wolves find their way back on their own. And while 20 years ago the idea of wolves recolonizing the peninsula would have been dismissed as wishful

thinking, not a few of the experts we talked with conclude that wolves returning to the peninsula on their own is inevitable.

Indeed, one of the more exciting issues under discussion has been that of "wildlife connectivity." Most of us are familiar with wildlife over-crossings and under-crossings (perhaps most visibly in the I-90 overpass) which allow terrestrial species to cross major roadways without fatalities. These under- and over- crossings not only reduce the tragedy of roadkill, but can encourage genetic diversity and recolonization, all while reducing harm to vehicles and drivers. The Washington State Department of Transportation is interested in creating one or more wildlife crossings in the I-5 corridor in southwestern Washington. Doing so would likely speed up the natural migrations of wolves from the southern Cascades to the Olympic Peninsula.

Questions remain: if wolves don't return on their own, will the National Park Service move ahead with reintroduction, as they did in the 1990s in Yellowstone? Or if a handful of wolves do make it on their own, will NPS need to fortify their genetic diversity with augmented releases?

Stay tuned as the story develops!

Washington Modernizes Trust Land Transfer Program

By Jim Freeburg

Established by the Washington State Legislature in 1989, the Trust Land Transfer (TLT) program allows the Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to reposition state trust lands to better serve the trust beneficiaries and the people of Washington. Trust lands generate non-tax revenue for government services, primarily through timber sales. But some of the lands that DNR manages are financially underperforming, and also have high ecological values and public benefits. Through TLT, DNR transfers these areas out of trust status to DNR's Natural Areas Program, another public agency, or a local Tribe.

During the first 30 years of the TLT program, the legislature invested over \$60 million in the Olympic Peninsula (and over \$800 million statewide) to put thousands of acres into conservation status. Places like the Dabob Bay and Shipwreck Point natural areas owe their existence to TLT. However, state funding for

TLT had dwindled significantly in recent years as public attention drifted elsewhere.

Three years ago, a group of conservationists came together with the goal of revitalizing TLT as a conservation tool. After a significant grassroots advocacy campaign, the legislature recently passed a bill to modernize the program and invested nearly \$20 million to protect over 5,000 acres of ecologically valuable land across the state. On the Olympic Peninsula, this funding will support expansion of the Devils Lake and Dabob Bay natural areas.

OPA helped to fund this effort, leading the way for a new era for trust land transfer. Because of the new legislation, organizations like OPA will be able to nominate state trust lands that are better off in conservation than primed for a timber sale. There are many opportunities for more trust land transfers around the Olympic ecosystem as state trust lands are found all around the Olympic Peninsula.



Voice of the Wild Olympics
Amy Youngblood, Editor

Olympic Park Advocates
PO Box 27560
Seattle, WA 98165-2560

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Olympic Park Advocates

*The value of an organization endeavoring to promote
the protection and integrity of a
World Heritage Site and its Wilderness is infinite.
Visit us at olympicparkadvocates.org*

- \$500 Individual Life Member (One time)
- \$250 Patron (Annual)
- \$100 Sustaining Member (Annual)
- \$50 Associate Organization (Annual)
- \$50 Contributing Member (Annual)
- \$30 Family Membership (Annual)
- \$20 Individual Member (Annual)
- \$5 Student / Low Income (Annual)
- _____ Gift Memberships* (Annual)
- _____ Donation (Tax Deductible)

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Date _____

Email _____

Please make checks payable to **Olympic Park Advocates**.
Your contributions are tax-deductible.
**Is this a gift? Along with your check please provide the name
and address for the receivers. OPA will send the receivers an
acknowledgement of your gift and you a tax receipt.*

Mail to: Paul Robisch, Membership Chair, PO Box 27560, Seattle, WA 98165-2560

Dues and gifts are 100% deductible. OPA is a 501(c)3 organization.
Membership includes subscription to the **Voice of the Wild Olympics**.