



FIELDREPORT

Northwest Region | Spring 2015



The National Parks: An American Success Story



By Ron Wyden

At almost 100 years old, and with more than 400 parks, nearly 50 national heritage areas, and more than

2,000 national historic landmarks, the National Park System is one of America's greatest success stories. And for more than 90 of those years, the National Parks Conservation Association has been there lending support and voicing the needs of our parks.

For Oregonians, getting into nature and enjoying the outdoors is in our DNA. National parks like Crater Lake and the John Day Fossil Beds are some of the reasons Oregonians are so proud to call our state "home." Visitors flock to national parks, like the trails and monuments that commemorate Lewis and Clark's journey in Oregon, to experience history and the great American outdoors.

The National Park System is a roadmap of America's treasures. In Oregon, visitors can see stunning stalagmites and stalactites inside some of the world's

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Return of Grizzly Bears

By David Graves

You may not be aware, but there are a handful of grizzly bears in the North Cascades that are believed to roam back and forth across the Canadian border. These few remaining bears are the only grizzlies in the lower 48 states outside of the greater Rocky Mountains. Grizzly bears historically ranged across most of western North America including the Cascades, until their populations were decimated by habitat loss and unchecked trapping, poisoning and hunting. Historical records indicate that more than 50,000 grizzly bears once roamed the American west in the early 1800's. With so few grizzly bears left in the Cascades today, biologists believe they may soon disappear entirely if recovery actions aren't taken.

Recently, NPCA members and the public participated in the scoping process for an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to determine how to restore grizzly bears to the North Cascades Ecosystem (NCE), which surrounds North Cascades National Park. This EIS process is being led by the National Park Service and US Fish and Wildlife Service, with support from the US Forest Service and the WA Department of Fish and Wildlife.

NPCA supports restoring a healthy population of grizzly bears to the North Cascades, their home for thousands of years. Habitat that supports grizzly bears

also supports hundreds of other species and human needs like clean water, healthy forests and quality outdoor opportunities. But with only a few grizzly bears remaining today, an important piece of this ecosystem is in danger of disappearing forever. Recovering the North Cascades grizzly population will help keep the Northwest a natural, beautiful and sustainable place in which to live, work and play.



NPCA is cosponsoring presentations on tracking grizzlies in the North Cascades and how to safely share the wilderness with them with wildlife biologist Dr. Bill Gaines. For information on upcoming "Ghost Bears of the North Cascades" presentations, contact sbrundle@npca.org.

Top: Grizzly Bear @Gzstudio77 | Dreamstime
Above: A canoe in North Cascades National Park in Washington @epicurean | Istockphoto

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NORTHWEST CORNER BY NW REGIONAL DIRECTOR ROB SMITH

Just before Congress adjourned for the holidays, the House and Senate attached a multitude of lands and parks bills to the Defense spending authorization bill, addressing a backlog of pending legislation--some of which had languished for many years (see article, page 1). This clears the way for looking ahead to the 2016 Centennial for the National Park System.

The Centennial theme of the NPS is "Find Your Park," an effort to engage more people in the national park experience and build a broader constituency for the parks for the next hundred years.

NPCA is complementing this effort with our "Find Your Voice" campaign to enlist our members, supporters and the public in advocacy for parks. We want to turn the popularity of our national parks into a force



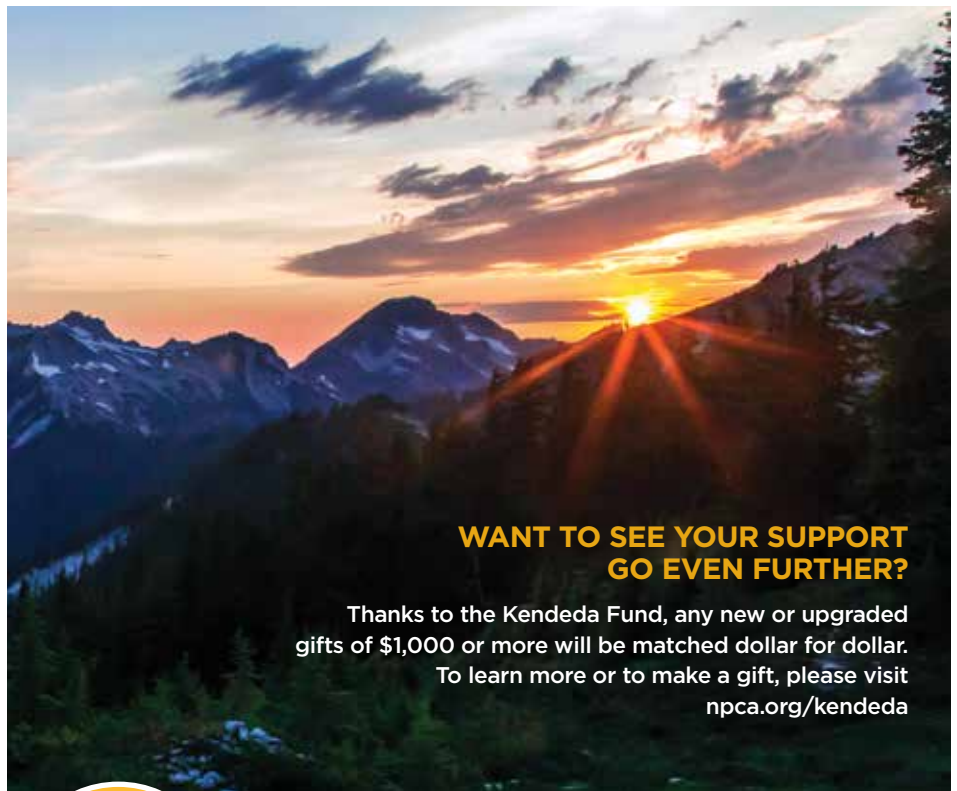
for policy and support from Congress and the President.

Which brings us to money. The National Park System costs a tiny fraction of a cent for every federal tax dollar spent--on average, a cup of coffee a year for each of us. And yet our parks are

enormously popular, supported by people on every part of the political spectrum. The Centennial is a time for restoring funding, which has dropped for several years, and addressing the more than \$11 billion (yes, with a "b") backlog of deferred maintenance and repairs in parks.

That's why we need to find more voices as well as new audiences for our national parks. Thank you for supporting this work as the National Park System--"best idea we ever had"--approaches its second century.

Above: Rob Smith © Shannon Brundle **Below:** Sunset on Copper Ridge, North Cascades National Park © Andy Porter | Flickr Creative Commons



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The National Parks Conservation Association will celebrate the **100th anniversary** of the creation of the **National Park System** by launching a campaign aimed at creating the next generation of national park supporters. As America's advocacy organization for the parks, NPCA is launching the **Find Your Voice** campaign to inspire the next generation of national park advocates.

Elwha River Restoration Update

by David Graves

Now that the Elwha River has been returned to its natural state, it's starting to show just how dynamic it is—constantly changing course and reshaping the landscape along the way.

In early December, the river rose above its 20-foot flood stage at the McDonald Bridge twice during the course of a series of three storms that drenched the Olympic Mountains. This flood destroyed four Altair Campground campsites and damaged 200 feet of road. The storms dropped about a foot of rain into the Elwha River watershed, which allowed the river to scour out large deposits of sediment from former Lake Mills and carry it downstream. This removal of sediment is a vital action of the recovering river. It allows the river to restore its natural course and, just as importantly, restore sandy beaches that existed at the mouth of the river before the dams were built. The sediment that has washed downstream has built an estimated 80 acres of sandy beach at the mouth of the Elwha River on the Strait of Juan de Fuca. This has restored important habitat for hard-shell clams such as butter clams and littlenecks, plus Dungeness crab, which have been absent for nearly 100 years.

At the site of the former Glines Canyon Dam, the Park Service is opening walkways on the east and west side of the river to the edge of the dam abutment and spillway, which have been left in place for historical



interpretation and viewpoints. The walkway on the east side of the river, accessible by taking Whiskey Bend Road, is now open. A small parking lot has been constructed at the walkway. Due to additional heavy rain and wind in early January, 50 feet of the Whiskey Bend Road was destroyed past the parking area and vehicle access beyond that area is closed. The west side viewpoint is scheduled to be open this summer.

On January 15, NPCA along with Nature-Bridge and several other organizations hosted a screening of *Return of the River*,

an award-winning documentary about the Elwha River Restoration. Nearly 700 people packed Town Hall Seattle to view the film and participate in a Q & A with the filmmakers and notable figures from the restoration project. This incredible film objectively and accurately portrays the history of the struggle to restore the river and its importance to the Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe, Olympic National Park, and the region. For more information about the film and to find future screenings, visit the film's website at: elwhafilmm.com/.

Above: Glines Canyon Dam Removal
©Brian Cluer | NOAA Fisheries

The National Parks: An American Success Story

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only marble caverns, at the Oregon Caves National Monument. I am proud to have worked to protect this uniquely beautiful monument by introducing legislation that expands the boundary of the National Park Service land to create the Oregon Caves National Monument and Preserve. The expansion passed Congress last year as part of a year-end package of bills and will enhance the existing Oregon Caves National Monument and protect this majestic site for future generations.

National parks don't just benefit their visitors. They benefit the people who live near them, as well. Every year, Americans

pack up their cars and hop on planes to visit national parks and monuments. People who visit national parks also rent hotel rooms, visit restaurants, and buy souvenirs on their way. Whether hiking a National Scenic Trail, exploring fossil beds, or learning about U.S. history from Alcatraz to the Washington Monument, recreation drives tourism. Outdoor tourism at national parks supports hundreds of thousands of jobs, especially in rural areas that are most in need of an economic boost.

With the 100th anniversary of the National Park System coming up next year, I'm looking for ways to further enhance our National Park System and preserve it for future generations. In 2013, as chairman of the

Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, I held a hearing to find fresh, creative ways to prioritize the protection of America's parks for the benefit of the U.S. economy and future generations of visitors. I remain committed to finding a bipartisan solution that fully reauthorizes the Land and Water Conservation Fund to guarantee consistent and stable funding to further protect America's national parks and ensure public access for generations to come.

As Americans get ready to say "happy birthday" to the National Park System and blow the candles out on 100 years, I look forward to working with NPCA to guarantee the next 100 years of honoring America's special places.



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EVENT CALENDAR Join us to learn about and enjoy your Northwest national parks!

Washington Coastal Cleanup Olympic National Park April 25, 2015

Join NPCA at Olympic National Park for this annual event to remove coastal debris from park beaches. NPS offers free camping at the Kalaloch Campground for all volunteers. For more information, contact Shannon Brundle at sbrundle@npca.org or (206) 903-1457.



National Trails Day North Cascades National Park June 6, 2015

Join NPCA for our annual trail maintenance volunteer event at North Cascades National Park. NPS will be offering free camping for the weekend for NPCA volunteers. For more information, contact Shannon Brundle at sbrundle@npca.org or (206) 903-1457.

Right: David Graves working at the Elwha River revegetation volunteer day ©John Gussman

Revegetation for the Elwha River Olympic Greenhouse June 2015

NPCA will work with a small group of volunteers to transplant small plants at the Olympic National Park greenhouse. The plants were planted from native seeds collected from the Elwha River and will be transferred to the river banks later in the year. To sign up or for more information, contact sbrundle@npca.org.

New National Parks

The most significant expansion of the National Park System in nearly three decades occurred on December 19, 2014, when the President signed into law the National Defense Authorization Act. Although an unlikely vehicle for park protection, in the Northwest this law established the **Manhattan Project National Historical Park** as a new national park, with sites in Washington, New Mexico, and Tennessee. At these sites under a veil of secrecy workers built the world's first production-scale nuclear reactor—and created a lasting impact on world history. The legislation also expanded **Oregon Caves National Monument and Preserve** by adding 4,000 additional acres of federal land to the existing monument to better protect the larger watershed and the cave system. President William Taft originally protected 480 acres of this area in 1909. Beyond our region, the legislation established six other new national park sites, expanded eight additional park units and extended authorizations for 15 existing National Heritage Areas.

For details and more information on these events, visit www.npcap.org/nwevents.



As Americans, we are blessed to live in a land of natural beauty with visionaries who work to preserve this beauty for future generations. My wife, Deb, and I are on a journey to visit all of our national parks—a labor of love, a treat for the senses, and a rediscovery of our history. I wanted to help preserve and enhance these treasures, and serving on NPCA's Northwest Regional Council was an easy decision. It's a pleasure to use my passion and professional skills, collaborating with talented and diverse Council and staff, to protect and create new national parks.

— **GLEN BRUELS, NW REGIONAL COUNCIL**

Left: Northwest regional council © Shannon Brundle