



Preserving America's National Parks

By Sen. Jeff Merkley (D-OR)

Growing up in Southern Oregon and East Multnomah County as the son of a millwright, my family made full use of our forests and parks. We camped in our state parks on the coast, sailed and fished on our lakes, hiked throughout the Columbia Gorge, and had one precious visit to Crater Lake National Park.



These experiences fostered a great love for the outdoors, and over time I've been able to visit a few more national parks: Yosemite, Yellowstone, Acadia, and the Grand Tetons. Our national parks and wilderness areas are a great treasure and it is a priority for me to preserve and strengthen them for the generations to come.

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Above: Sen. Jeff Merkley. Photo Courtesy of Office of Senator Jeff Merkley.

Washington's Wild Crossroads A Chance to Save the Grizzly

By Graham Taylor

Up in the Northwest region, we rarely spend much time considering the Golden State. But lately, California's state flag, adorned with the California Grizzly has struck me as peculiar. The flag has given me that feeling one gets when stumbling upon a crossroads, a place in time where history could repeat itself or a long-entrenched cycle could be broken. As the National Park Service prepares to ask the public to comment on grizzly bear recovery in the North Cascades, I am left to wonder if Washingtonians will allow the grizzly to wander off into the same sun that set on California's population of bears.

While big sculptures of golden grizzlies greet visitors as they enter the California State Fair at Cal-Expo, these folks may not realize the California Grizzly is an extinct population. In the North Cascades, grizzlies use their enormous claws and muscles to dig up roots and tubers in alpine meadows. These bears provide a multitude of ecological benefits while playing a role to strengthen the suite of predators living alongside them.

The balance of nature cannot be fully described here, as there is not enough room for all the scientific observations. What's more, scientists are the first to admit that they have so much left to learn about this

ancient species. Suffice to say that the grizzly's activities affect a multitude of processes and systems in the forests and mountains, aerating the soils, dispersing seeds and benefitting hundreds of species of plants. They act as a serious check on the weakest members of the ungulates herd, while the added competition helps other predators become even more efficient hunters.

Even though scientists determined the North Cascades remain highly suitable habitat for grizzly bears, it has taken the Federal Government decades to get the resources needed to fund a recovery process in Washington State. It will take decades longer to repair the damage to a population that

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Top: Diablo Lake, North Cascades National Park
©Galyna Andrushko | Dreamstime.com

Above: Grizzly Bear mother nursing two cubs
©Andreanita | Dreamstime.com

FIELD REPORT

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NORTHWEST CORNER BY NW REGIONAL DIRECTOR ROB SMITH

The 100th anniversary of the National Park Service is upon us in 2016. It's a time for celebrating "America's best idea", but more importantly to recommit to our national parks and assure their relevance and support for the next century.



future park advocates and leaders through projects with UW, Antioch and UPS students, the YMCA and NPCA's own Next Generation Council.

We're also working with The Mission Continues and other military veteran groups to arrange projects in national parks to do needed work and

help vets transition back into civilian life.

We have a host of service projects in various park units which get members and friends out into these areas and learning about park protection issues, as well.

And we're continuing to save these special places for future generations by rallying support for grizzly bear recovery in the North Cascades, saving the wilderness in and around Crater Lake, securing salmon habitat along the now free flowing Elwha River, protecting meadows and the watershed at Oregon Caves, and supporting prairie restoration at San Juan Islands.

Join us in "Finding Your Voice" for the national parks in 2016!

Above: Rob Smith at Mount Rainier ©Shannon Brundle **Below:** Ashley Powell ©Ashley Powell

Welcome to NPCA's Future Leaders Council



ASHLEY POWELL

Ashley Powell was born and raised in the historic Puyallup Valley. The vista of Mt. Rainier from her hometown inspired her curiosity for adventure and affinity for nature at a young age. At the University of Washington Seattle she studies Biology (Ecology, Evolution, and Conservation) and landscape architecture (Urban ecological design). As an experiential learner, she finds joy in being able to directly apply her learning out in her extensive 'backyard.' Having experienced the healing powers of nature on her own health, she is driven to find innovative ways to advocate and quantify the human connection to environment.

Find Your Voice

National Parks Conservation Association has launched Find Your Voice—an initiative to encourage people to be both national park visitors and national park advocates. Through community service events, speaker series and advocacy trainings, NPCA is working to educate, engage and empower people to speak up for America's favorite places to they can thrive well into their next century.

For more info about the initiative and activities near you, please visit FindYourVoice.camp.



Olympic Tranquility

Guest Perspective by Gordon Hempton

We should all be blessed with a place we can call our own—a place where we can feel intimately connected with the rest of our life; a place where we can shed, like water off a salal leaf, the cares (most of them trivial, after all) of a busier, stressful, noisy life back home; a place of contemplation and reinvigoration and peace. For me, that place is Olympic National Park. I discovered it with my ears.

But not initially. I first walked up Olympic's Hoh Valley trail alone, the summer before my senior year as a botany major at the University of Wisconsin. This was 1975, and I was taking a summer exchange course on photography at Evergreen State College. I backpacked in with an Olympus OM-2 and plenty of Kodachrome 25, intent on photographing what I'd been told was a spectacular, towering, temperate rainforest. I took plenty of photos, all right, but looking at them later, I felt frustrated. I didn't really know why until some six years later, when I returned to the Hoh not as a sightseer, but as a listener. Only then, I began to fully appreciate the rare charm of this secluded valley.

Since then, I've circled the globe three times searching for the pristine sounds of nature untrammelled by the noise of man on every continent but Antarctica. I've set up my equipment in every state in the nation and in most of America's national parks. Olympic is distinguished by two facts: It is the most sonically diverse of any U.S. national park, blessed with the piercing alarm calls of the endemic Olympic Marmot echoing off wind-sculpted krumholtz at Obstruction Point... the flute-like bugles of Roosevelt Elk in the towering, cathedral-like Hoh Rain Forest...

and nature's largest violins—Sitka Spruce logs washed up on Rialto Beach that vibrate wondrously inside cavernous, walk-in hollows, as the stony beach is bowed by the crashing tides. Olympic is also the least polluted by man-made noise of any national park in the lower 48.

According to the One Square Inch of Silence Foundation, these two facts make Olympic a prime candidate to become the world's first Quiet Park, the acoustic equivalent of International Dark Sky Parks (31 parks and growing since the designation's inception in 2001).

In 1999, while living in Port Angeles, Wes Henry, wilderness manager for the National Park Service, invited me to join a working group that drafted a Park Service reference manual: *Natural Soundscape Management*. Now, 17 years later, that document sits mute, unused and unfunded by the agency. And natural soundscapes and natural quiet, both

recognized resources by the Park Service, remain as endangered as ever. (The daily noise-free interval at Olympic has shrunk from one hour to barely 20 minutes in the last ten years.) It's high time to finally treat endangered pristine soundscapes in the manner of endangered species. Only by legislative act can we ensure that rare tranquility of Olympic is protected from noise pollution for future generations.

The time has come to designate Olympic National Park the world's first Quiet Park, so we can listen to what the mountains, the forest, and the sea have to say—without interruption.

If not during our Park Service centennial year, then when?

Gordon Hempton, Founder of The One Square Inch of Silence Foundation
Joyce, Washington



Above: Lake Crescent in Olympic National Park ©Jerryway | Dreamstime.com

Preserving America's National Parks

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Thus, I was very pleased that one of my first votes in the U.S. Senate was to approve a bill creating and expanding 117 public lands and wilderness areas, including five in Oregon.

In 2010, Senator Wyden and I put together an amendment as part of the Federal Aviation Administration reauthorization bill that bans air tour flyovers within Crater Lake National Park. Part of what makes Crater Lake so beautiful is its serene, peaceful atmosphere. When folks are hiking along its edge, or enjoying a cup of coffee at the lodge, they shouldn't be distracted by the

noise disruption of planes overhead. The amendment also clearly defined the National Park Service's role and responsibility in protecting National Park resources and values.

The National Park Service helps preserve our natural history and heritage. Through the preservation of our magnificent forests, beautiful waterways, and stunning landscapes we are able to educate, reflect and explore. There are cultural, social, and economic benefits to the protection of our national parks.

It's thanks to organizations like the National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA) that we are able to appreciate America's

favorite places every day, and can teach the next generations about U.S. history through the exploration of the great outdoors. It is a non-partisan organization with one central mission—to work tirelessly to defend our national parks. The NPCA represents national park supporters from all around the country who love their parks and want to ensure we care for them well. I'm proud to be a friend and ally for that cause.

NPCA advocates, inspires and informs the public to ensure that national parks are protected. I'm committed to continuing working toward that common goal and, together, I believe we can make the world a better place.



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Remembering an Outdoor Advocate

By Rob Smith

Things wild and beautiful lost a champion at the beginning of this year when Doug Walker apparently fell victim to an avalanche while snowshoeing in the Cascades. Doug was deeply involved in the civic life of the Seattle area and his wife Maggie remains so. Doug didn't just support work, he got actively engaged. His passion was getting people, especially kids, outdoors to enjoy the places that were so special to him, and hopefully to develop a commitment to saving them for the future. Doug was quick to call when an issue needed some attention, but also quick to ask how he could help when a challenge was brought to



Courtesy of Walker Family

him. Doug served on NPCA's advisory councils both nationally and regionally, and scores of other boards and groups. His efforts to streamline permits for youth groups getting out to our national forests was just put into policy by Interior Secretary Jewell, a fitting tribute to Doug's advocacy. Doug's smile, persistence and tales of outdoor adventures were ever-present, and will be sorely missed.

GiveBIG for National Parks!

By Paul Balle

As we celebrate Spring in Seattle once again, our June 30th fiscal year-end isn't far off. What a year: new parks were announced (Manhattan Project at Hanford and others in the U.S.); we issued a new report on funding needs at Olympic National Park; I even celebrated my first year at NPCA! If you're reading this Report, you're passionate about parks. Please honor your passion, and consider supporting NPCA by June 30. It makes our work in the Northwest and around the country possible. And, if you make a donation to NPCA on GiveBig (May 3rd), your gift will be matched by Seattle Foundation! For more on GiveBig see <http://www.seattlefoundation.org>. Or support us anytime at: www.npca.org/give. Thanks for helping protect YOUR parks!

Call for Volunteers!

To learn more about exciting volunteer opportunities with NPCA go to npca.org/events



Left: Volunteers restoring the Elwha River watershed ©Laurel Moulton



Washington's Wild Crossroads

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once numbered 50,000-100,000 in the lower 48, especially in light of the recent release of a proposal to remove the greater Yellowstone ecosystem grizzly bear from the endangered species list. With fewer than 2,000 left, and 20 or less in the Cascades, we can take a road less traveled, and make a commitment to share our parks with the native species that make them so wonderfully wild.

Soon the Park Service will announce that it is taking public comment, signaling the time for individuals to weigh in. We hope you take a minute to participate in this environmental review process, making sure Washington keeps the grizzly, and with it, all the countless ecological processes, cultural significance and mysteries we've yet to unlock about the bruin.

Our allies at the Woodland Park Zoo are working closely with us and other partners as we prepare for Bear Awareness Week, slated

to start on June 4th and continue to June 11th. The week will be full of exciting events and interesting opportunities to learn more about the species and ways we can play safe in bear country. More information about the events will be posted on the website below.

You can lend your voice to the grizzly by signing our statement of support online. Learn more about the issue and take action by visiting our coalition website at: www.northcascadesgrizzly.org