



FIELDREPORT

Northwest Region | Spring 2017



Vets Serve the Parks

By Rob Smith

Imagine using two-person hand saws to clear a wilderness trail of toppled trees after hiking miles over rolling terrain at Crater Lake. Or consider tirelessly pounding postholes to make way for new fencing at Fort Vancouver and slopping through mud to plant new trees and bushes for salmon habitat at Lewis and Clark. Are you sore yet? What if we tack on attacking prickly vines, debarking logs and hauling gravel for a new trail and picnic area at Ebey's Landing?

Now picture doing all of this, and more, with a can-do attitude and zero complaints.

When NPCA's Northwest Region teamed up with The Mission Continues (TMC), a military veterans group, to get work done in our national parks, that's exactly what happened. In the process of connecting vets to new service opportunities within their communities, we've seen what a lot of hard work and camaraderie can achieve.

"When they left the military, they did not leave their desire to serve behind. That came with them," says Doug Pfeffer, TMC's city impact manager for the Northwest.

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Oregon's Peter DeFazio, Park Champion

By Representative Peter DeFazio (D-OR)

In Oregon, enjoying and protecting our natural resources is in our DNA. Each year, tens of thousands of visitors come to our state to enjoy our parks, wilderness areas and forests. Throughout my career in Congress, I have worked not only to protect these extraordinary natural lands but to make them accessible for every American to visit and enjoy. I have consistently pushed for increased federal investments in park facilities and infrastructure, as well as added protections for our rivers and natural areas.

Not only are our national parks a treasured resource, they are economic engines for our communities. According to the Outdoor Industry Association, residents and visitors spend \$12.8 billion on outdoor recreation in Oregon annually. Nationally and in Oregon, our parks have a proven track record of generating economic opportunities for rural communities, for creating and sustaining jobs, and for preserving and protecting some of our most pristine lands and waterways for future generations.

The National Park System includes sites in every state in the union, yet the park system has suffered from reduced federal investment with a growing repair backlog. Years of funding cuts have led to inadequate day-to-day maintenance and fewer rangers to



protect and interpret parks. The Park Service's construction account alone has declined 62 percent in today's dollars over the last decade.

I will always look for opportunities to preserve Oregon's abundance of natural beauty. I fought for 20 years to expand Oregon

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Top: Bill Sycalik, NPCA member, runs near Olympic. ©Nick Danielson | nickdanielson.com **Above:** Peter DeFazio at Devil's Staircase Wilderness in Oregon. Photo courtesy of Office of Representative DeFazio.

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America's Common Ground

Do Americans agree on anything anymore?

Our national parks, literally America's common ground, appear to be some of the places we can all appreciate. They protect our shared story — our struggles and our triumphs — and remind us of what we value most.

But these special places are suffering, despite their popularity and record visitation during last year's National Park Service centennial. Funding levels haven't kept up with needs, leaving the park system with aging facilities, worn-out trails and crumbling roads. Today, the backlog of work to be done totals close to \$12 billion (with a "b").

Olympic needs \$105 million for roads, Mount Rainier needs \$21 million for buildings, North Cascades needs \$4 million for trails and Crater Lake needs \$80 million for all the above. Other smaller park units, from San Juan Island to Oregon Caves, have repair lists, too.



The new administration — with bipartisan support from Congress — has called for a renewal of America's infrastructure. Our national parks should be part of that investment.

Need another reason? Money spent in national parks reaps a \$5 return to area economies for every \$1 invested. Those are good jobs and projects right here in America.

NPCA has joined with others to call for a congressional initiative that would reduce the backlog over the next decade. Contact your members of Congress to support rebuilding the places in America that we all support: our national parks.

Above: Rob Smith at Mount Rainier ©Shannon Brundle

MEET OUR SUPPORTERS

Judy Pigott

By Paul Balle

Judy Pigott's eyes light up when talking about our national parks and public lands. "Parks must exist!" this long-time NPCA supporter says. Noting their incredible value, she adds, "Their benefits to people of all ages, the environment and society are well documented. Being in nature helps people feel connected and less alienated."

Judy's most memorable park experiences include watching a mama grizzly and her three cubs play in Denali last year, enjoying a magical trip to Mount Rainier with her sisters a few years ago, and spying one of the most elusive mammals in Glacier in 1972.

That summer of '72, Judy and her husband were in the park looking for a campsite. After hastily setting up camp and preparing dinner to beat an approaching storm, Judy saw an unusual animal dart away. It was a wolverine! Years later, she returned to Glacier with her two sons to look for wolverines



with wildlife expert and author Doug Chadwick. Though there were no repeat sightings, the trip was excellent.

Judy, a lifelong Washingtonian, joined NPCA decades ago after visiting national parks with her parents, and she continues to be a standout advocate and volunteer for us. We thank you, Judy, for all you do to support our important work protecting our parks!

Above: Judy Pigott at Olympic National Park. Photo Courtesy of Judy Pigott.

Updates from Around the Northwest

By Graham Taylor and Julia Tesch

HEAR OUR OLYMPICS Natural Quiet at Olympic

- We launched npca.org/hearourolympics to support the Hear Our Olympics campaign.
- In January, we formally objected to the U.S. Forest Service's draft permit to allow the Navy to use forest roads to facilitate Navy jet training over Olympic National Park.
- In February, NPCA's Earthrise lawyers filed a Freedom of Information Act lawsuit against the U.S. Forest Service for information on the impacts to Olympic from Navy jet training.
- In February, we submitted public comments opposing the Navy's proposal to increase the number of "Growler" jets training over Ebey's Landing and the Olympics without further impact analysis.
- Contrast Olympic's natural sounds with the noise of Navy Growlers at bit.ly/2mabGdf.

Elwha River Restoration

- In November 2016 and March 2017, we brought volunteers to the Elwha River to plant native plants with NPS botanists.
- The Park Service doesn't anticipate needing to plant more on the banks of the Elwha within park boundaries, so next year we will plant on the lower Elwha, just outside the park.

Grizzly Bear Recovery in the North Cascades

- The National Park Service (NPS) and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) are considering four options for grizzly bear recovery in the North Cascades, and accepted public comment in February and March.
- NPCA endorsed "Alternative C – Incremental Restoration" as the best option to recover grizzly bears.
- Working with Friends of the North Cascades Grizzly, we encouraged hundreds

to attend meetings all over Washington in support of grizzly bear recovery. We also motivated thousands to submit online comments to NPS and USFWS.

- Watch our latest film "Time for the Grizzly?" by Chris Morgan at bit.ly/2mezohY.

Crater Lake Forever

- In March, we presented the case for wilderness protection for Crater Lake National Park to the Public Interest Environmental Law Conference.



Left: Hoh Rain Forest ©Svitlana Imnadze | Dreamstime.com **Top Right:** Volunteers after a day of planting on the banks of the Elwha in November 2016 ©NPCA | Julia Tesch **Bottom Right:** Grizzly bear ©Volodymyr Byrdyak | Dreamstime.com

Inclusion in Our National Parks

By Ian Reid, NPCA Intern

Fair representation and inclusivity are vital parts of national park advocacy. Our public places need to be cultivated both for the public and by the public, and this requires that we pay attention to those who have been historically overlooked. This winter, I spent six weeks working with Next Generation Advocacy Council member Ashley Mocerro Powell to organize a film screening of "An American Ascent," which follows the first crew of African American mountaineers to Denali. We hosted the screening with support from the University of Washington Society for Advancement of Chicanos/Hispanics and Native Americans in Science (SACNAS) on February 9 at wələbʔaltx

Intellectual House on the University of Washington's Seattle campus. Ashley and I hoped the film would start a discussion about how race and identity influence people's experiences in outdoor recreation.

The event exceeded our expectations. More than 60 community members from a wide range of backgrounds and organizations attended and contributed to a rich discussion around the difficult, but essential, questions highlighted by the film, such as: How can the environmental industry best represent the many faces of the outdoors? How does each of us see the outdoors differently from each other? Whom should our public lands serve, and how do we make this idea into a reality?

During my six weeks as an intern—and especially during this event—I began to understand why NPCA actively pursues diversity and inclusion. These values are at the core of what the National Park System stands for and aims to provide. Park advocacy will only be truly successful if it reflects the true face of America. I am excited to see where Ashley and the staff of the Northwest Regional Office take this passion next.

THANK YOU

to both Ashley and Ian for your excellent work in organizing and running a fantastic event!



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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Save the Date

Check npca.org/northwest regularly for the most up-to-date information on upcoming events.

April 29

Washington Coastal Cleanup

Come clean up beaches in Olympic National Park with NPCA and Washington CoastSavers.

June 4

National Trails Day

Join us for trail restoration in North Cascades National Park.



SEATTLE FOUNDATION'S SEVENTH ANNUAL

GIVEBIG

is Wednesday, May 10!

As in years past, NPCA will participate to seek continued support for our work in the Northwest, and nationally. Your gifts will be matched by the Foundation on May 10, so please mark your calendar for this special online giving event!

For more information:
givebigseattle.org/npca-nw

Vets Serve the Parks

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“Partnering with NPCA means that our members can once again be of service,” Doug says. “[It] means that they can have an immediate impact in an area that needs help right now.”

And when the day’s projects are done, the vets are quick to add their voices to those advocating for more park funding and for protecting the landscapes in and around the parks. We’re planning more service projects for this year, and non-military volunteers are welcome and encouraged to join us. Just contact NPCA’s Northwest Office to, as our partners at TMC say, “report for duty”.



Above: Veterans with The Mission Continues line up a new fence at Fort Vancouver National Historic Site on September 11, 2016. ©Rob Smith | NPCA

Oregon's Peter DeFazio, Park Champion

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Caves National Monument and Preserve and passed the Oregon Caves Revitalization Act, which expanded protection for Oregon Caves from 480 acres to 4,550 acres. As the Ranking Member of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, I secured funding for the Federal Lands Transportation Program in the bipartisan surface transportation bill, which provides multi-modal access within national parks and some funds to help with the infrastructure backlog. We need to do more to ensure that present and future generations can access and enjoy these magnificent places. NPCA

has been a valuable partner in these efforts.

The National Park Service’s mission is to “conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wildlife therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations.” Unless we turn back the tide of devastating funding cuts, the mission will be that much harder to fulfill.

