



NPCA Teams Up with Students to Make New Elwha Film

By Graham Taylor

The story of the Elwha River's rebirth continues to capture the imagination of people all over the planet. In a world where too many conservation stories stir sadness and uncertainty, the Elwha's story is a testament to the power of individuals and to nature's breathtaking ability to mend old wounds.

The story's relevance may be why I received a phone call from Miles Whitworth, student at Seattle's Ballard High School, asking if NPCA had any video footage of the Elwha.

Whitworth is part of Ballard High School's highly acclaimed Digital Filmmaking Program, taught by Matt Lawrence. In 2016, when IMAX approached Lawrence regarding a project to encourage students at five schools to make conservation-oriented films, Ballard High School accepted the challenge. Captivated by the conservation success still unfolding at the Elwha, Whitworth and his film team of fellow students selected this story as subject for a film. The students were amazed by how people could right a past wrong, and were thrilled by the return of the salmon to the river.

continued on page 3

FIX THE PARKS Northwest Congressional Members Respond



By Rob Smith

Our national parks have suffered years of chronic underfunding while visitation keeps breaking records. Each year, parks must defer needed repairs to their roads, trails, water systems and other facilities due to a lack of money. Over time, this has led to a repair backlog of over \$11 billion.

For national parks in Washington state, the repair total comes to nearly \$400 million, while in Oregon it's more than \$100 million.

Some issues are obvious to the visitor, such as a washed-out bridge along the Pacific Crest Trail in North Cascades, a closed overlook at Mount Rainier's Ricksecker Point or the Chateau at Oregon Caves that has neither an elevator to upper floors nor modern fire protection. But some, like the outdated drinking and wastewater systems at Olympic which are 15 years beyond their useful life, are less apparent.

Thanks to the work of park staff who juggle scarce resources and take on multiple jobs,

visitors can still safely enjoy their park visits for the immediate future. Lacking the necessary funds to keep up with repairs and routine maintenance, however, is a serious and growing long-term problem, just as it would be if we didn't care for our own homes or vehicles.

Fortunately, the proposed National Park Service Legacy Act (S.751/H.R.2584) would address this problem. The Act, which has strong bipartisan support in Congress, would create a targeted fund for repair projects. Several Northwest members of Congress are early supporters.

Rep. Derek Kilmer is lead sponsor in the House, with Rep. Dave Reichert as a lead co-sponsor in the House. As this field report

continued on page 4

Top: Veterans with The Mission Continues volunteer at Mount Rainier National Park in July. ©NPCA | Rob Smith **Above (Left to Right):** Rep. Kilmer | Rep. Reichert | Sen. Murray | Rep. Newhouse | Rep. Jayapal. Photos courtesy of the offices of the Senator and Representatives and of NPCA.

FIELD REPORT

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NORTHWEST CORNER BY REGIONAL DIRECTOR ROB SMITH

The Power of Parks and People

“So, how are the parks?”

This is a question I often get from people concerned by the news of slashed budgets, questionable decisions from recently-appointed agency leaders, environmental program rollbacks and challenges to national monument designations.

Despite the many threats, national parks remain a rare point of agreement across the political spectrum and the country. People really like our national parks and are willing to pay for them. And elected officials are responding to the popular will, and there's a message of hope in that (see *Fix the Parks*, front page).

NPCA is building that base of support here in the Northwest through our park volunteer projects and through our partnerships with groups like The Mission Continues, an organization of military veterans who care



about our parks. We're also recruiting a variety of organizations, businesses and individuals to speak up for park funding.

With the power of people, we can protect, restore and fix our most special places. And in doing so, we can perhaps set an example of bringing people together around America's common ground, our national parks.

Above: Rob Smith at Mount Rainier ©Shannon Brundle

MEET OUR SUPPORTERS

The Johnsons

By Paul Balle

The Johnson family—that's Emily and Eric, and their sons Owen (14) and Lincoln (9)—were first inspired to join NPCA when they learned about our work to ensure adequate funding to support and maintain our national parks. National parks are among their favorite places to vacation, and the family has visited a national park together almost every summer. They recently had a great RV camping experience in North Cascades National Park, with stops to explore Mount Rainier, too.

History-loving Owen favors Antietam National Battlefield in Maryland, while Lincoln prefers the red rocks of Zion National Park after the family's 2016 vacation there. The boys each have their own views on why supporting NPCA is a good idea. Owen says people should support NPCA and our parks because “we can't do it alone. We all have to do our share.” Lincoln says, “National parks



are great places to walk and climb and take pictures,” which we interpret to mean he'd like our parks to be around for a long time!

The family first supported NPCA through the Seattle Foundation's GiveBIG Day four years ago. This year, we were proud to feature the Johnsons' story in our annual GiveBIG fundraising appeal which helped us raise almost \$20,000—our biggest GiveBIG yet! Thank you for your support and your dedication to our national parks, Emily, Eric, Owen and Lincoln!

Above: Photo courtesy of the Johnson Family.
Below: Red Fox in Mount Rainier National Park ©Rich Leighton | Dreamstime



It's been a busy year for NPCA both locally and nationally: we've continued the fight to protect parks from military jet noise, to bring back threatened species, and protect our monuments, too. Please support NPCA before year-end at www.npca.org/trustees. Don't forget your employer match. Thank you!

Updates from Around the Northwest

By Northwest Staff

The Mission Continues

In April, NPCA became a contributing sponsor of The Mission Continues' 2nd Platoon in Seattle, a group of military veterans serving national parks in the Northwest through volunteer projects. Together, we helped with Rally at Rainier in July where we spent the day clearing an icy trail at Mount Rainier National Park (see photo, front page).

Sound and FOIA

On July 31, the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) released its final decision to permit the Navy's use of forest roads to support jet

warfare training over the Hoh Rainforest and Olympic National Park. The training threatens the natural quiet of these special places. With the help of the Earthrise Law Center, NPCA filed a Freedom of Information Act suit against USFS and obtained 4000 pages of information that we are now reviewing. NPCA has requested similar information from the Navy.

Cleaning the Air over Puget Sound Parks

NPCA appealed a decision by the Washington Department of Ecology to permit the BP oil refinery north of Bellingham to expand without installing modern pollution controls. Emissions from the refinery could degrade

air quality at both Olympic and North Cascades National Parks. Along with our Earthjustice attorneys, we're preparing expert testimony for a hearing next spring.

Save the North Cascades Grizzly

We are working to build and mobilize support for grizzly bear restoration in counties surrounding North Cascades National Park. We've hosted multiple events with our members and supporters around the grizzly bear recovery zone. NPCA also elevated the issue to a national scale this summer by featuring the issue as the cover story of our National Parks magazine. To read the full article, visit <http://bit.ly/2u1CpG>.

Getting the Goats

NPCA is supporting the proposed removal and relocation of invasive mountain goats from the Olympics to protect the alpine meadows and marmot habitat at Olympic National Park. The park is designated an International Biosphere Reserve and is home to 18 plant and animal species found nowhere else in the world.

Left: Pristine air over Mount Shuksan in North Cascades National Park ©Aquamarine4 | Dreamstime



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continued from page 1

While NPCA did not have Elwha video on hand, we worked with local filmmaker John Gussman to secure the footage the students needed to finish their film. Months later, I had the privilege to attend Ballard High School's film festival to see their amazing work.

Their film, *On the Backs of Salmon*, premiered in June to coincide with the United Nations' World Environment Day. The film is set to be shown in IMAX theaters nationwide. You can also find it online at <http://bit.ly/2tDRfyv>.

As former Senator Bill Bradley has noted about this river's ability to inspire: "The great gift of the Elwha is hope."



Above: Cecelia O'Rollins prepares the camera, while teammates Chris Barrett, Martin Bolivar, Jasper Land, Maddie Lausted, Aaron Miller, Freeman Marshall, and Miles Whitworth prepare the rest of the shoot elsewhere. Photo courtesy of Miles Whitworth.



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FIX THE PARKS

continued from page 1

goes to press, Reps. Dan Newhouse and Pramila Jayapal have also signed on in the House. In the Senate, Sen. Patty Murray co-sponsored an identical bill.

The new fund would tap previously unallocated mineral revenues, such as off-shore oil royalties, which contribute billions of dollars to the federal coffers. The fund would dedicate an increasing amount of this revenue over the course of 30 years, starting at \$50 million and moving up to \$500 million, to eliminate the park system's repair backlog.

This legislation is a great way to rebuild the National Park System in its second century, following the park system's 100th birthday in 2016. And, it invests in a goal with widespread support—protecting our national parks for future generations.

Please thank our congressional champions who've demonstrated early support, and encourage other congressional members to get on board. Let's fix the parks!

MEET YOUR PARK John Day Fossil Beds National Monument



By Julia Tesch

On August 21, 2017, John Day Fossil Beds welcomed tens of thousands of visitors who gathered to witness a total solar eclipse that passed directly over the monument's three units: Sheep Rock, Painted Hills and Clarno. Viewers experienced approximately two minutes of totality, or complete coverage of the sun by the moon, in the first total solar eclipse to grace the Pacific Northwest this century.

If you couldn't make it to John Day to view this astronomic wonder, John Day has ample

other scientific and historical resources to explore year-round. The monument is a source of ongoing research and discovery. Paleontologists have unearthed an enormous range of fossils within the monument—like the 44-million-year-old Creodont, a large carnivore similar to a wolf or hyena, or the 29-million-year-old Miohippus, a three-toed horse. "We have world-class fossil resources," says John Day Superintendent Shelley Hall. "Every day you come here is an amazing day."

Above: John Day Fossil Beds National Monument
© Zrfphoto | Dreamstime

Save the Date

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

September 30 National Public Lands Day at Mount Rainier

Join us at Longmire for a day of planting, campground restoration and more as we give back to one of our nation's first national parks. RSVP at npld2017.eventbrite.com.

November 16 Volunteer Appreciation Party

Join us at the NPS-affiliated Wing Luke Museum of the Asian Pacific American Experience in Seattle to celebrate the work of our amazing volunteers! Details TBA at npca.org/northwest.



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