



Protecting Oregon's Masterpieces

By U.S. Senator Jeff Merkley

From the vibrant blue water of Crater Lake to the stunning colors of the Painted Hills, Oregonians know our iconic public lands are priceless works of art.

As Chair of the Senate Interior Appropriations Subcommittee, I am in the driver's seat to secure funding for programs and projects that protect our natural resources and help Oregon communities and Tribes become more resilient to devastating wildfires, smoke, and drought fueled by climate chaos. I am also focused on preserving and growing protections for some of Oregon's most incredible landmarks, which includes securing \$45 million to rehabilitate Crater Lake National Park's scenic East Rim Drive.

Following my success in driving the expansion of the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument, I am now championing legislation to establish a new Sutton Mountain National Monument on 66,000 acres of public land surrounding the iconic Painted Hills. This bill will not only put this awe-inspiring destination more prominently on the map for lovers of the outdoors across Oregon and America, but it will also

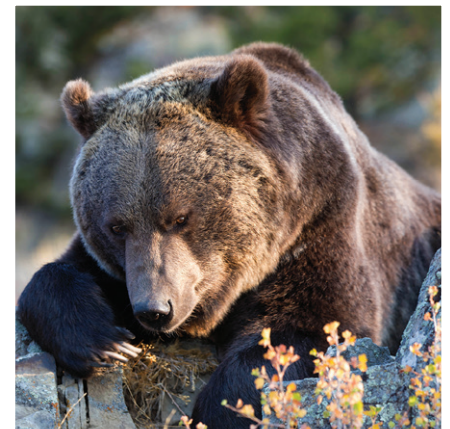
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National Park Service Seeks to Return Grizzlies to the North Cascades

By Graham Taylor

In a major victory for NPCA and our parks, the National Park Service reopened the process to restore grizzly bears to North Cascade National Park and the surrounding wilderness. After a six-year hiatus, the NPS will once again team up with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to explore the best possible way to bring back the grizzly bear, the only missing wildlife species in the park. Hunted and trapped to extirpation, the great bear otherwise thrived in the North Cascades for thousands of years, feasting on the cornucopia of berries, roots, tubers, and other small prey.

Federal agencies learned much from their last attempt at this process, canceled in 2020 at the end of the Trump Administration. Alongside grizzly bear restoration, the agencies will consider new rules governing management, including invocation of section 10(j) of the Endangered Species Act (ESA). This section of the ESA was designed to relieve landowner concerns that wildlife reintroductions could restrict use of private, tribal, or public land. The provision will reduce consultation requirements for land managers in grizzly bear habitat and give agencies more flexibility to prevent bears from wandering into trouble.



Since the last process, NPCA has been diligently reaching out to local communities, landowners, tribes, under-resourced communities, wildlife biologists, and many other individuals that love the North Cascades. We heard loud and clear that bears need to be returned to the park. We'll continue to support the National Park Service as they identify the best path forward for the park and surrounding recovery zone. And just maybe, the grizzly will return to her home in the North Cascades, enhancing its wildness, and making our crown jewel national park whole again.

Top: Olympic National Park's Hoh River valley, blanketed in snow ©NPCA **Above:** A grizzly bear forages for berries ©Dennis Donohue | Dreamstime

FIELD REPORT

Winter 2022

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Climate of Change at Olympic

Visits to Olympic National Park reveal a changing landscape aggravated by climate change. A slowly receding Pacific shoreline has produced the dramatic sea stacks along the craggy coast over thousands of years, but now the bluffs at Kalaloch are eroding too fast for the wooden fences separating cabins from the beach edge to be replaced; plastic warning tape blocks off collapsed sections. The former gazebo overlook is simply gone.



also ongoing rising sea levels and more aggressive storms due to climate change.

Removing the upper dam on the Elwha River almost a decade ago freed the stream which later washed out the primary access road up the valley. More rain and bigger storms predicted by climate models will make an ever-changing landscape even more volatile. A major

question looms for the National Park Service: rebuild or rethink what sustainable access means going forward?

The effects of climate change are here for Olympic and Northwest national parks.

Above: Regional Director Rob Smith at Olympic's Klallhane Ridge. Photo courtesy of Rob Smith.

Just up and down the coast, Quileute and Quinault communities are moving low-lying buildings, including the school, homes, and government services, to higher ground in anticipation of both an eventual tsunami but

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better protect the John Day River Basin's rocky ridges, high plateaus, rolling grasslands, and riverine habitats, as well as the vast, unique wildlife these landscapes host.

I'm also working to protect our rivers and streams. My legislation to expand the Smith River National Recreation Area would provide critical protections to the iconic Smith River's headwaters and designate over 75 miles of new wild and scenic rivers within the watershed to help boost the local recreation economy and protect a critical salmon habitat that many Oregonians rely on. This bill cleared a major hurdle over the summer by passing out of a Senate committee on a bipartisan vote.

These bills are deeply personal for me because I grew up in Oregon exploring our public lands and waters—and I will never stop fighting to protect this beautiful place we call home.



Above: U.S. Senator Jeff Merkley takes in the Southern Oregon landscape. Photo courtesy of Senator Jeff Merkley.

Military Veterans Speak Up for Natural Quiet

By Colin Deverell

Across the country, military veterans are putting boots on the ground and raising their voices for national parks. NPCA has initiated a new program to connect veterans to parks through backcountry experiences, service projects, and advocacy training. In April of this year, NPCA launched a national veterans advisory council to guide us in converting veteran awareness and appreciation of national parks into action.

In the Northwest, this effort is taking shape in the Hoh Rainforest of Olympic National Park. This summer, NPCA provided low-cost guided trips for veterans into the park to learn about its natural resources, history, and opportunities to help protect it. More than a dozen veterans had the opportunity to spend several days deep in the park with backcountry guides at reduced or no cost.

These experiences are in support of NPCA's Hear Our Olympics campaign, which aims to reduce military aviation noise in park wilderness. While the NPS works hard to protect the lands and waters of the park, its natural sounds are punctuated by fighter jet noise, as the U.S. Navy uses the airspace



above Olympic National Park for training flights as frequently as twelve times per day. Without jet noise, the park would be one of the quietest places in the Lower 48 states. While training the next generation of pilots is a worthy goal, everyone deserves the opportunity to experience America's natural lands the way they were intended, especially our veterans.

NPCA is planning additional backcountry advocacy experiences for veterans in Summer 2023 and we're excited to share

their perspectives with national park decision makers.

For more information about the Hear Our Olympics campaign, visit www.npca.org/HearOurOlympics

For more information about NPCA's Veterans Program, visit www.npca.org/veterans

Above: Veterans heading out into the Olympic National Park backcountry ©NPCA

BY THE NUMBERS

By Rob Smith



44

National parks seeing record visitation in 2021, including Mount Rainier with nearly 2.5 million visitors

Left: Hikers at Mt. Rainier National Park ©Noblige | Dreamstime



300

Sites of historic, cultural and natural interest could be revealed along the Lewis and Clark

National Historic Trail with a restored lower Snake River.

Above: The Snake River in eastern Washington State ©Witold Skrypczak | Alamy

5 Degrees F. increase in Crater Lake surface water temperature since 1960s due to climate change



Right: The Phantom Ship at Crater Lake National Park ©Dmillenheft | Dreamstime

14,000

Acres saved from gold mining in British Columbia's upper Skagit River above North Cascades National Park

Right: North Cascades National Park's Skagit River valley © Edmund Lowe | Dreamstime





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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



Opening Doors through Great American Outdoors Act

MAJOR GAOA PROJECTS

Crater Lake

East Rim Drive reconstruction
\$45 million

Olympic

Hurricane Ridge Lodge rehabilitation
\$7 million

Mount Rainier

Stevens Canyon Road reconstruction
\$28 million

Fort Vancouver

Parade grounds and
barracks rehabilitation
\$19 million

By Colin Deverell

As funding from the landmark Great American Outdoors Act supports big ticket projects in well-known national parks, Oregon Caves National Monument and Preserve is making good use of smaller sources to restore the park's historic chateau.

Located between Redwoods and Crater Lake National Parks, Oregon Caves National Monument and Preserve includes more than 4,500 acres of forestland, one of the most

extensive cave systems on the West Coast, and the only underground Wild & Scenic River in the country. The park's chateau is one of the iconic lodges within the park system, constructed from local timber in the 1930s.

Today, the chateau is undergoing a multi-million dollar renovation freed up by the landmark Great American Outdoors Act. While the new GAOA funding is supporting major projects across the Park System, including road work at Crater Lake, older sources of funding are increasingly

available with less competition, meaning that smaller parks like Oregon Caves are more likely to receive them.

The Great American Outdoors Act was a landmark achievement for our parks. Just two years since its passage, the law has already provided nearly \$4 billion in additional funding to parks to address deferred maintenance, freeing up smaller sources for other needed projects. Its added resources ensure that all parks, regardless of size, can fix longstanding challenges and improve visitor experience.

Above: Miller's Chapel at Oregon Caves National Monument & Preserve. ©NPCA

THANK YOU!

From the NPCA
Northwest Team

A special thank you to the Snoqualmie Indian Tribe for partnering with NPCA to fight for cleaner air in Washington.

NPCA leverages the Clean Air Act's Regional Haze Rule and builds and supports a diverse coalition of clean air advocates to push for cleaner air in our national parks and communities. Some of our most under-resourced Washington communities live near the same polluting sources that also harm our national parks. Fighting for clean air supports our public health and our beautiful parks. We are grateful to the Snoqualmie Indian Tribe for their commitment to clean air in Washington.



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