

PARK PASSION

THE DIFFERENCE YOU'RE MAKING IN YOUR NATIONAL PARKS • OCTOBER 2020



PROTECTING MEADOWS, WILDLIFE & YOU

BY AMBER NELSON

While it's been a tricky year for all of us, there have been some bright spots for Washington's National Park Fund.

Thanks to those who give, we've purchased a new Subaru Crosstrek Hybrid for our ranger friends at Stehekin in the North Cascades, launched the restoration of a VERY dilapidated trail in the Carbon River corner of Rainier, and provided Olympic with what it needs to expand their good work with the fishers and marmots. All told, we will be contributing more than \$500,000 to Mount Rainier, North Cascades and Olympic National Parks during this crazy year of COVID.

We have hope. We KNOW that brighter days lie ahead. Regardless of the state of our wonderful union, stand by us...the best is yet to be.

LAURIE WARD
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



"People don't realize how fragile the meadows are." This from Maureen McLean, Program Manager for the Meadow Rover Program at Mount Rainier National Park. "If the Meadow Rovers were not out, the park could easily be destroyed, the beauty of it." What's a national park to do? "It has been shown through various studies that a person in uniform — whether it's a volunteer or ranger — speaking to the public does more to prevent damage than all the signs and ropes that you can put up. So, the Meadow Rovers are preserving the resources, the beautiful flower fields, everything around us at Paradise and Sunrise — and they do this by educating. And, by teaching the people, the people become caretakers themselves."

And the Meadow Rovers do that and more. "Meadow Rovers are the eyes and ears. They're the volunteers, out on the trails, meeting the visitors. They're at the trail heads. They're carrying radios. If there's an emergency, they radio it in, relaying important information so that the

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PARK PERSON OF INTEREST: ALEX BRUN
Mountaineering Ranger, North Cascades National Park

FOUNDATION FOCUS:

NORCLIFFE FOUNDATION

WNPF would like to thank the Norcliffe Foundation for an unrestricted grant of \$10,000 that gives us flexibility to respond to the parks’ needs – even during a global pandemic. The onset of COVID-19 limited Washington’s national parks in the number of seasonal employees they could hire, reducing the parks’ ability to provide in-person guidance to thousands of visitors. To help, WNPF stepped up to create new navigational signage to keep visitors safe on the trails. Thanks to unrestricted funding from the Norcliffe Foundation and others, like our Over the Top Society, WNPF can support parks in addressing urgent needs like this on top of other projects that enhance visitors’ experience of our parks.

BY MARTHA CRAIG

Born in Vancouver, Washington, Alex Brun has had the rare privilege of working in some of America’s most spectacular National Parks, including Death Valley, Grand Canyon, Rocky Mountain, Yosemite and Grand Teton. He served seven seasons as a wilderness ranger in North Cascades National Park before becoming a mountaineering ranger there in 2017. Of the six months per year that Alex works in the North Cascades, approximately one month is spent in some kind of specialized training, anything from advanced EMS skills to search and rescue techniques. “Training is the foundation of everything we do,” says Alex. As a mountaineering ranger, Alex goes on regular climbing patrols to keep abreast of conditions in high-use climbing areas; conducts search and rescue operations; and staffs the Wilderness Information Center in Marblemount where he help visitors with trip planning, issues climbing permits, and provides timely information designed to keep visitors safe and make their North Cascades experience an enjoyable one.

Read more on our blog: wnpf.org/to-the-parks-our-blog

PROTECTING MEADOWS, WILDLIFE & YOU

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

rangers know exactly what they need to bring up the trail.”

And they’re able to do all of this thanks to your support. “The entire program is funded by Washington’s National Park Fund. I am eternally grateful for everything they’ve done to support this program.”

Think this sounds like fun? Maureen has one thing to say: “I encourage everyone to come see what the Meadow Rovers do and, if it fits your lifestyle, join up! We will be recruiting again next year.”



(L-R: Cleve Pinnix, Warren Dawes, Gerald Pumphrey, Rick Sandler)

TUESDAY HIKES ESPECIALLY FOR MEN (THEM)

BY KELLY SANDERBECK

Their mantra could be: 'Just Keep Hiking' or 'Ice Cream Above All'

When meeting with the convivial members of THEM, the first thing I'm told to get straight is that their main reason for existence is ice cream. Along with carrying the Ten Essentials, THEM members always hope to stop for ice cream afterwards. (I asked if I could be the token woman...) Whether it's the Eatonville Cottage Bakery or the Lilliwaup store for Olympic Mountain ice cream (which has become 'their' brand), THEM is firmly committed. "We're the only hiking group that experiences a net caloric gain after our treks! The first time we were coming back from Sunrise, we stopped for huckleberry ice cream. A German visitor who went out with us told his friends: 'I went out on a hike with an ice cream group with a hiking problem.'"

The beginnings of THEM was a confluence of events. The idea percolated in 2002 after Warren hiked with a friend at the Nisqually NWR on a Tuesday in April. Afterward, they said 'Let's do next Tuesday.' Pretty soon they did the next, and then the next. They started telling friends and it just took off. They didn't want to be quite as systematized as the Tuesday Trotters (an Olympia women's group) but wanted just enough organization to stay alive. Read more at our blog: wnpf.org/to-the-parks-our-blog

DID YOU KNOW?

The CARES Act (Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security) applies a temporary universal charitable deduction for all taxpayers of up to \$300. Ninety-two percent of taxpayers take a standard deduction rather than itemizing their charitable giving—under the new provision, taxpayers who do not itemize can now directly benefit from their charitable cash donations. For 2020, there is no limit on cash contributions to charities, making them fully tax deductible. The CARES Act increases the typical limit of giving from 60% of your adjusted gross income to 100%.



Our flat hat salute goes out to the 8,239 people who have National Park license plates! Thanks to you, more than \$235,000 has been raised for the parks this fiscal year!

"Special thanks to our friends on the Peninsula who've really stepped up for the fishers and marmots. Camaraderie Cellars and Olympic Park Associates have shown support that will advance the park's priorities for wildlife."

—Sarah Creachbaum, Olympic National Park Superintendent

fun fact

Betty Reid Soskin, who turns 99 on September 21st, is the oldest active ranger in the Park Service. She currently serves as an interpretive ranger at the Rosie the Riveter WWII Home Front National Historic Park. Happy Birthday Betty!



1904 Third Avenue, Suite 400
Seattle, Washington 98101



DRIVEN TO SUPPORT WASHINGTON'S NATIONAL PARKS?

Are you one of the more than 8,000 who have NP plates? THANK YOU! You're a part of the driving force generating \$220,000 a YEAR for our national parks!

Not a plate holder yet? Plates can be purchased for vehicles, motorcycles and trailers. Show some love today! For each national park plate registered in Washington State, \$28 is donated each year to Washington's National Park Fund to support critical work in Mount Rainier, North Cascades and Olympic National Parks. Plus, that \$28 is tax deductible.

2020 CAROLYN DOBBS AWARD RECIPIENTS

WNPF annually awards the Carolyn Dobbs Science Research Award to national park employees from each of the three parks who conduct boots-on-the-ground research with a level of commitment reminiscent of Carolyn herself, who passed away in 2014.

This year's recipients are:

- Paul Kennard, Regional Fluvial Geomorphologist for the Pacific West Division – Mount Rainier National Park
- Cheryl Decker, North Coast and Cascades Network Coordinator of the Invasive Plant Management Team – North Cascades National Park
- Roger Christophersen, Wildlife Biologist – North Cascades National Park
- Kerri Cook, Environmental Engineer – Olympic National Park

OUR MISSION is to raise private support to deepen the public's love for, understanding of, and experiences in Mount Rainier, North Cascades and Olympic National Parks. **OUR VISION** is for our three parks to be strong and vibrant, youthful and everlasting.